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AKIRA

KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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AKIRA

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

アキラ



BOOK
TWO

translation and english-language adaptation

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AKIRA BOOK TWO

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The artwork of this volume has been produced as a mirror-image of the original Japanese edition to conform to English-language standards.

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THE STORY SO FAR

Thirty-eight years after a catastrophic explosion of unknown origin levels Tokyo and triggers World War III, the world is rebuilding from the ashes. Neo-Tokyo has risen from the rubble and is preparing for the first postwar Olympic games, a shining new stadium being erected at Ground Zero of the blast that obliterated the great city.

A group of teenage motorcycle bikerz, led by Kaneda, makes an unauthorized run into the "blitz" zone where they encounter a terrified, writhing child with the number 26 tattooed on his palm and possessing of fantastic telekinetic power. Kaneda's friend Tetsuo is seriously injured during the encounter, after which the child suddenly disappears into thin air, not long before military police arrive and take Tetsuo for medical attention.

Later, Kaneda meets a beautiful and mysterious young woman named Kei, a member of an underground resistance group opposed to the going-on in the dead zone of the old city. When Kei and her associate Ryu become entangled with Kaneda and his friends, a second encounter with Number 26 unexpectedly occurs, quickly escalating into all-out mayhem as a covert government team led by the mysterious Colonel arrives on the scene to capture the ailing Number 26, named Takashi, by utilizing the aid of another such powerful child, Masaru. Kei and Kai fight their way to safety as Kaneda is caught in the middle of a destructive psychic maelstrom. Kaneda manages to escape, taking with him a small capsule dropped by Takashi, intended to kill his agony.

After returning to school, where his friends wonder about the fate of Tetsuo, Kaneda becomes obsessed with Takashi's capsule, and so he has a friend at the school infirmary analyze it. The drug is unregistered but clearly too-secret and incredibly potent, far too powerful for typical human consumption. Out of the blue, Tetsuo rejoins his mates, seemingly no worse for his near-death accident, although his demeanor soon becomes violent, unstable, and paranoid. Tetsuo is then taken from school by the Colonel after examination of electro-

encephalograms reveal that Tetsuo himself shows potential for developing psychokinetic abilities. At a secret facility, Tetsuo undergoes a battery of tests while another aged child psychic, Ryoko, foretells the awakening of yet another of his brethren — Akira — a revelation that stuns the Colonel and sends shockwaves through the corridors of power. Another jolt occurs when Tetsuo's dormant powers switch on and, steeped in growing pain, he escapes the facility, leaving a trail of destruction and death in his wake.

Kaneda goes looking for Kei and Ryu, and her comrades engaged in an act of sabotage at the Olympic site. The clandestine group gets Kaneda under their wing and guides him to the location of the capsule as earlier perceived. Kaneda doesn't yet realize of the power of the capsule, having hidden it in the gas tank of his motorcycle. The trio, having discovered the gang's hideout, breaks into it and finds Kei, Ryu, and Kaneda. Kei and Kaneda enter the vast caverns and tunnels beneath the city that lead into the dead zone. Chased by soldiers on high-tech, heavily armored flying platforms, Kei and Kaneda barely escape to the surface with their lives, although several of their pursuers are not so lucky.

On the streets of the city, the fevered Tetsuo is discovered by a rival bike gang, the drug-dealing Clowns, who plan to do him in until Tetsuo's growing powers disrupt his would-be killer in a grisly explosion of psychic fury. Tetsuo demands drugs to stop the pounding in his head, and the territorial bikers agree to take Tetsuo to their hangout to give him what he needs. There, the gang's angry leader, Joker, is quickly mollified by a grisly demonstration of Tetsuo's power. Tetsuo takes enough drugs to kill a normal human many times over; the only consequence being a momentary dulling of his headache. The Clowns crow as the apparently superhuman Tetsuo as their new leader.

Meanwhile, deep beneath ground zero is a hidden, ultra-seurity complex, the Colonel arrives to check the conditions in a near-absolute-zero status chamber designed to hold prisoner a single occupant — the entity known only as Akira, the power responsible for the destruction of Tokyo and World War III. Despite Ryoko's portentous visions, everything is as it should be...for the time being.

The Tetsuo-led Clowns, emboldened by the awesome power of their new chief, begin a violent rampage against rival bikers. Informed of Tetsuo's treachery and the strange powers he now exhibits, Kaneda hastily arranges a meeting of the other rival gang, who decide to band together to take on Tetsuo and the Clowns. Elsewhere, Ryu meets with Nezu, the leader of the underground, who has uncovered evidence that suggests the government has been for many years creating a unit of paranormal humans.

After a wild motorcycle battle with the Clowns, a contingent of bikers led by Kaneda's friend Yamagata corners Tetsuo in a warehouse. Tetsuo, growing more powerful and more aggressive by the minute, easily thwarts his attackers. Kaneda has the opportunity to shoot the paranoid madman, but the long association with his bugged friend prevents him from pulling the trigger. Yamagata tries to do the job himself, but Tetsuo kills him horribly. Kaneda hesitates no longer and shoots Tetsuo, who, in a wounded rage unleashes a burst of telekinetic destructions, Kaneda barely avoiding being crushed by falling debris. The Colonel and his forces arrive to find the wounded, pain-engulfed Tetsuo screaming for drugs. Kaneda attacks Tetsuo again, and in the struggle the capsule drops from his pocket. Tetsuo grabs the pill and prepares to take it, even as the Colonel warns him that the drug will kill him.

Tetsuo swallows the pill and almost immediately goes into a massive seizure and collapses, apparently dead. The Colonel has Kaneda taken prisoner but is interrupted as, incredibly, Tetsuo rises. Kaneda breaks away from his captors in an attempt to again attack his former friend, but a tidal wave of psychokinetic force sends Kaneda running for his life. Kei arrives in the nick of time to help Kaneda, but Tetsuo's power prevents their escape. The effects of the super-drug have eliminated Tetsuo's pain, and he prepares to kill Kaneda and Kei when he is suddenly confronted by the Colonel, who tells Tetsuo that he can be helped, both with the drug that takes away his pain and with training to help him utilize his power to its fullest capability. Tetsuo realizes he has few alternatives when the pain returns, and so he becomes the latest addition to the Colonel's paranormal menagerie — Number 41.



KANEDA



TETSUO



KEI



RYU



JOKER



MEZU



YAMAGATA



AKIRA

AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO





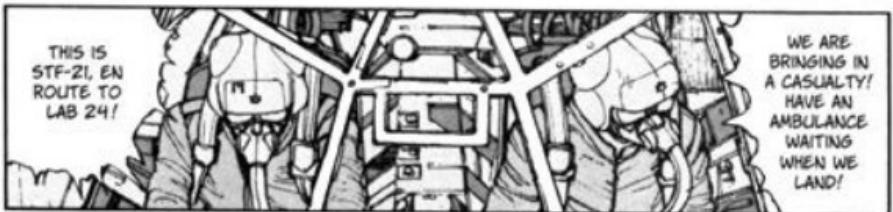
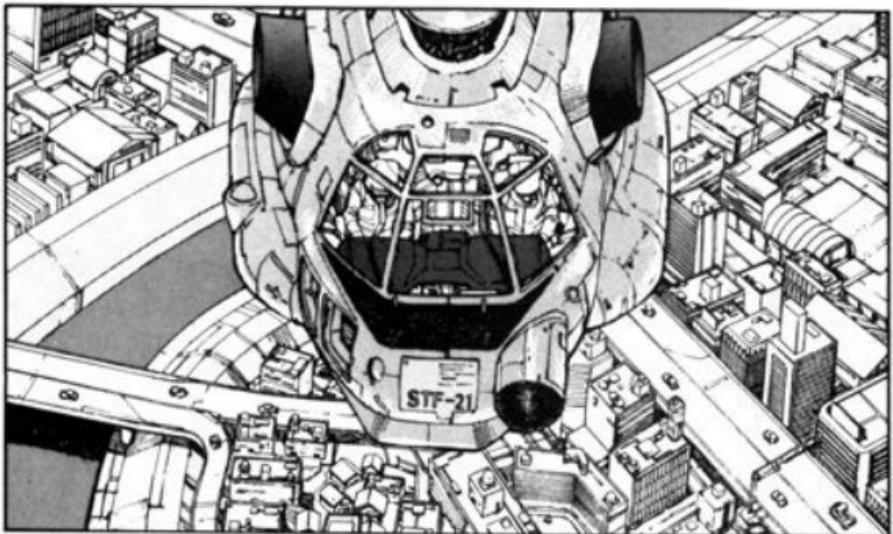


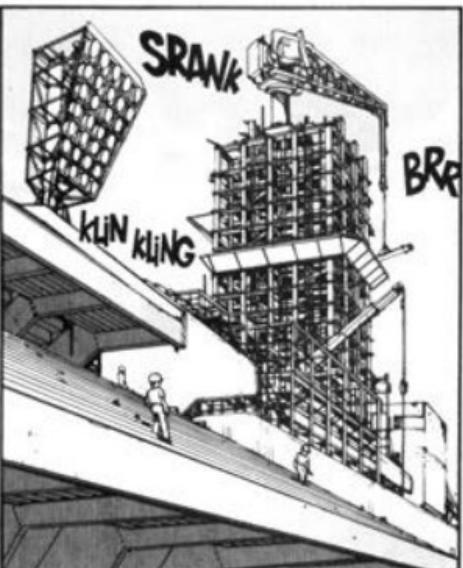


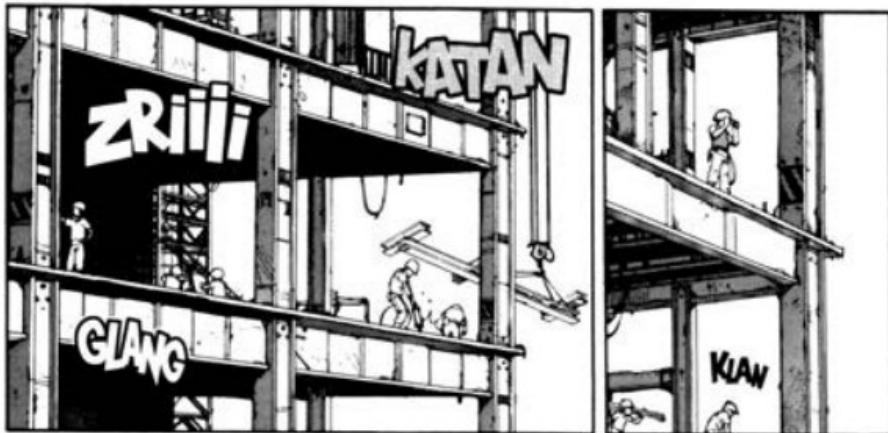
JUST A
FEELING I HAVE...
LIKE SOMEONE'S
TALKING ABOUT
ME.

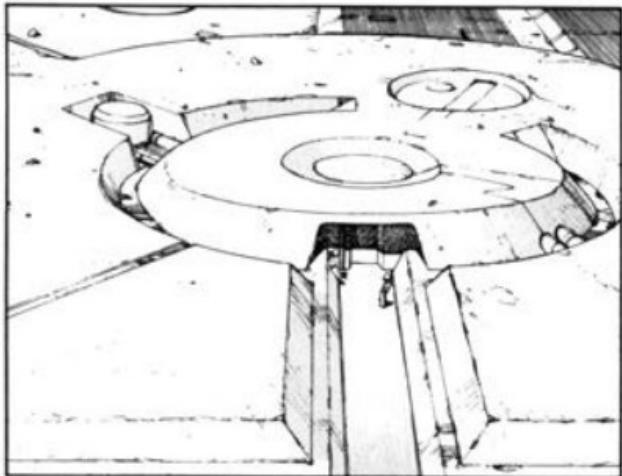






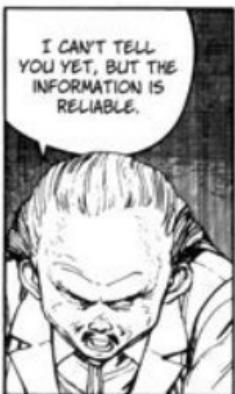


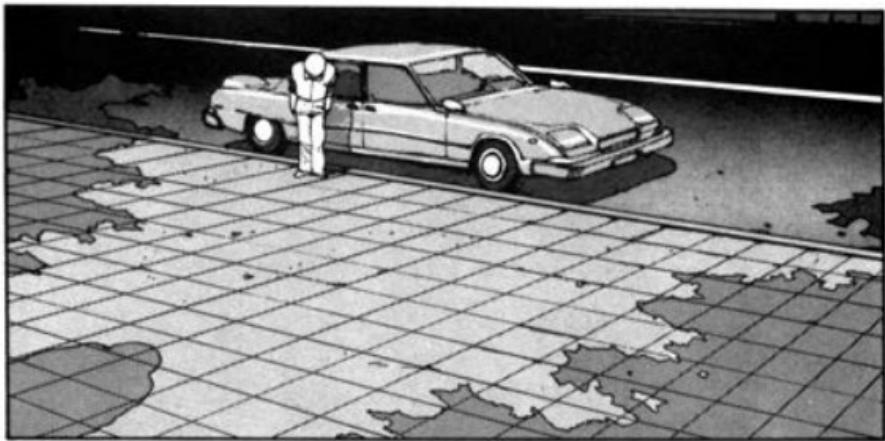


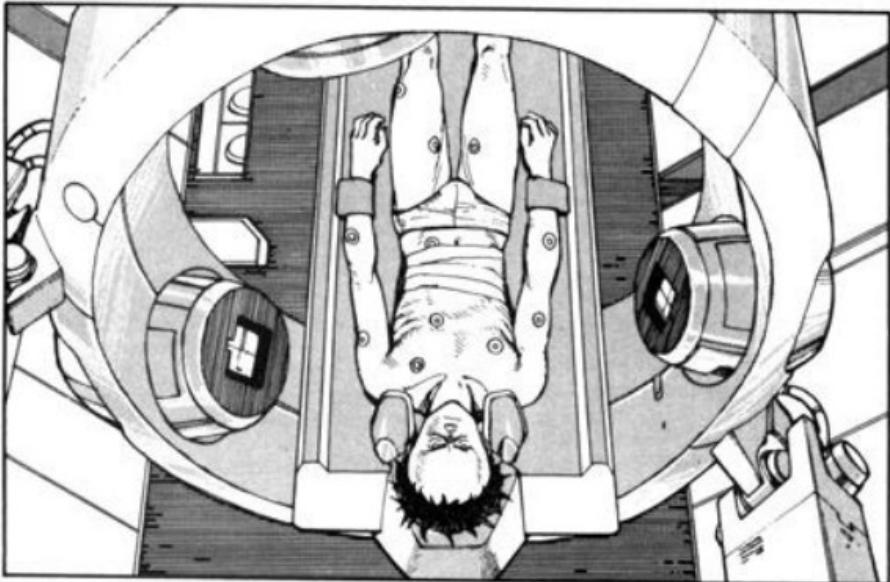




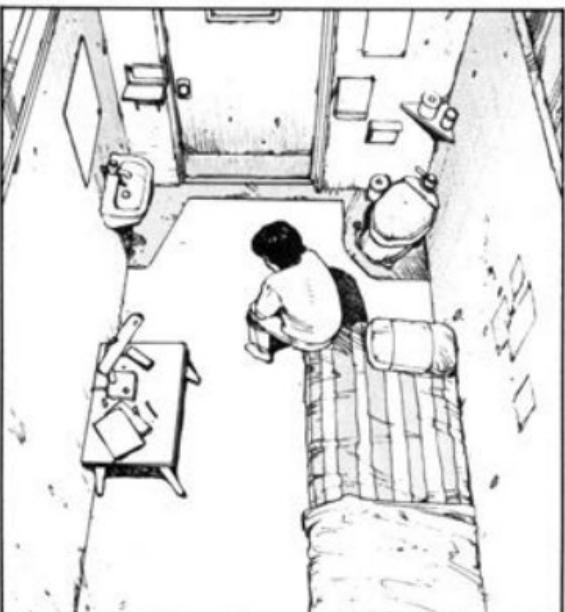
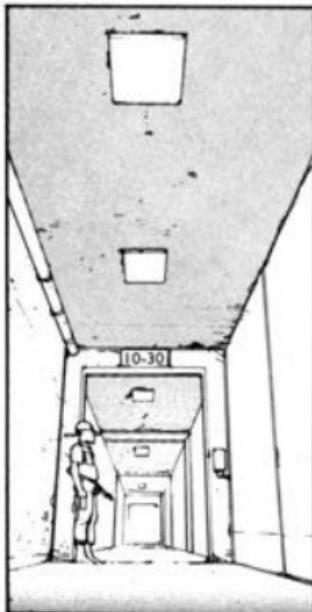


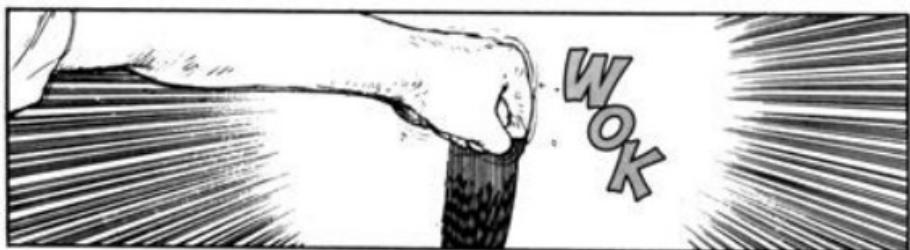












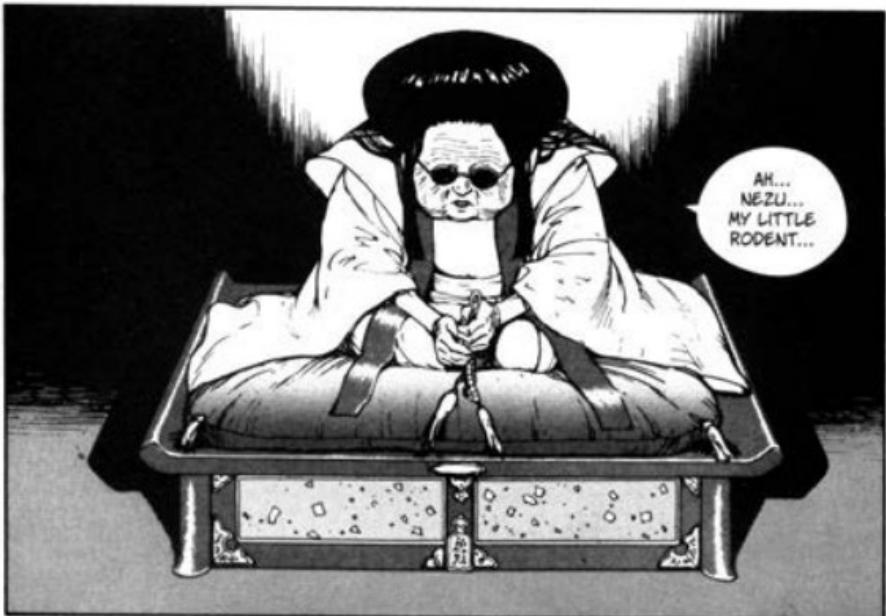
HELLO!
ANYBODY
HERE?

GOOD
EVENING,
MR. NEZU.

SHE'S
BEEN WAITING
FOR YOU FOR
SOME TIME.

WHY
DOES
SHE WANT
TO SEE ME AT
THIS HOUR?
IS ANYTHING
WRONG?

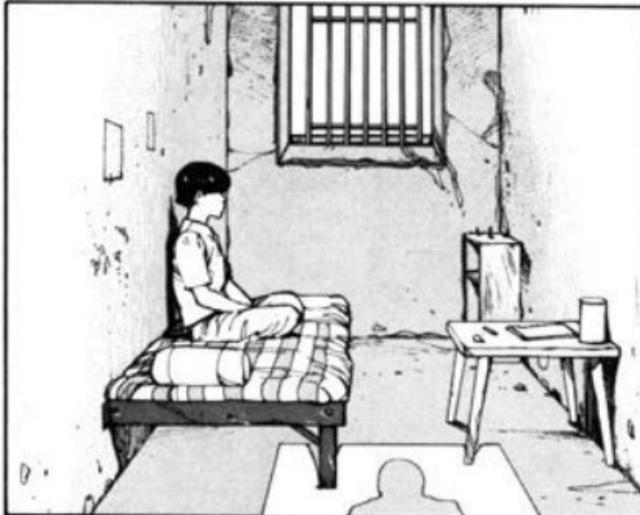
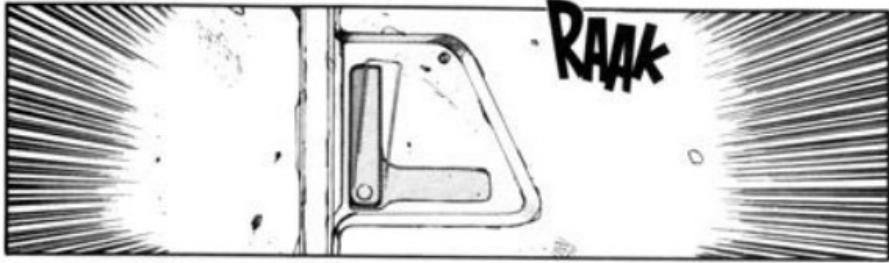
YOU'RE
LATE...

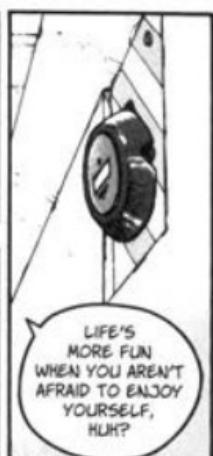
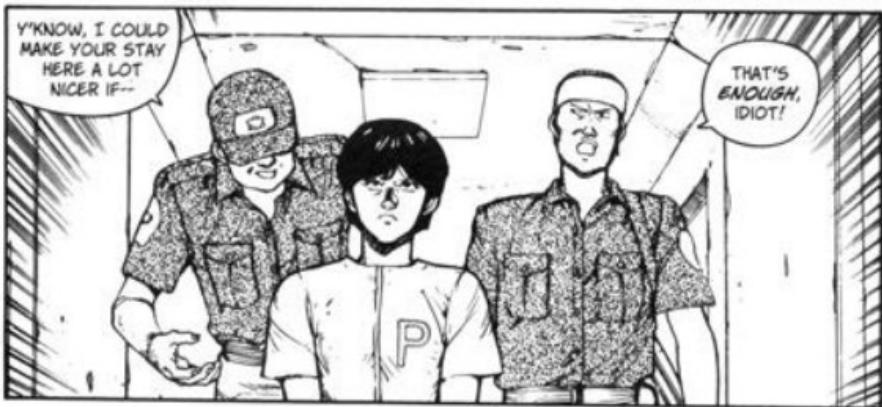


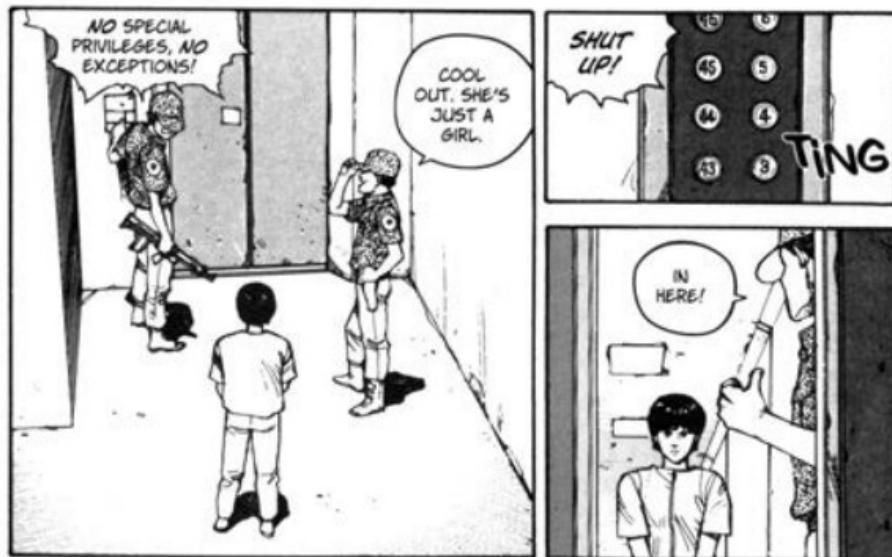
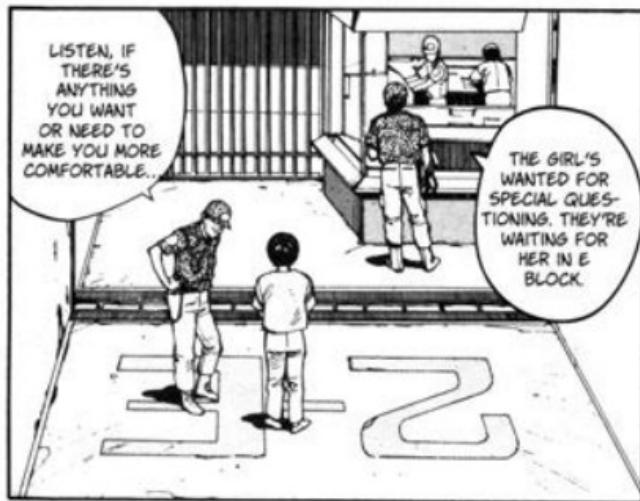




RAAK



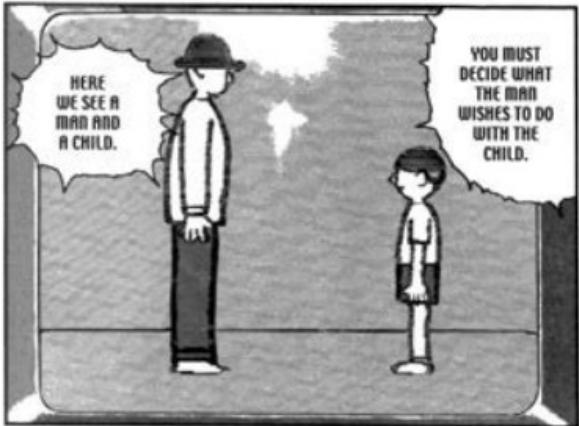


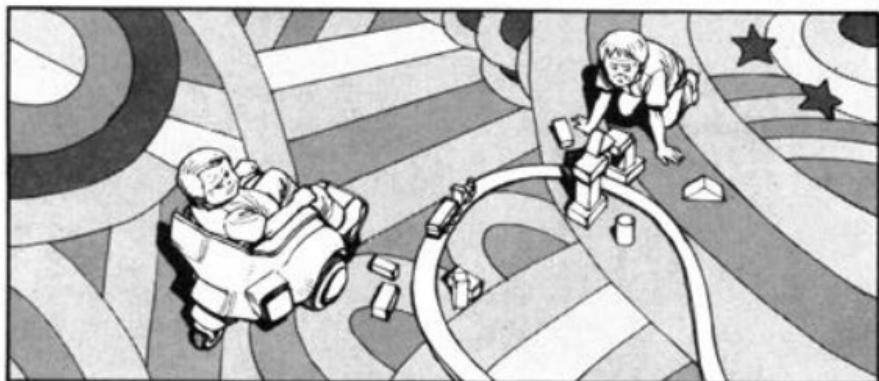


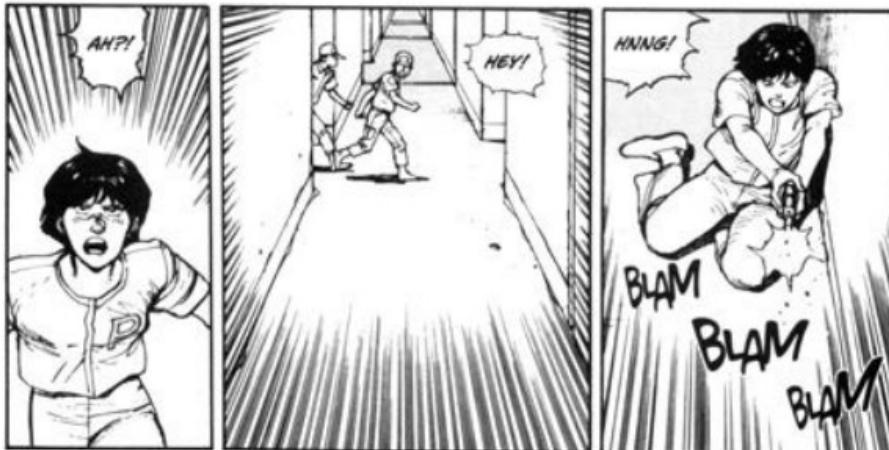
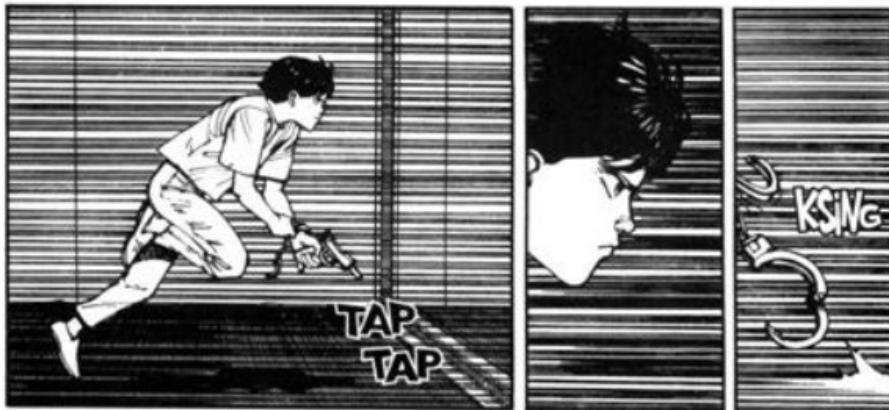














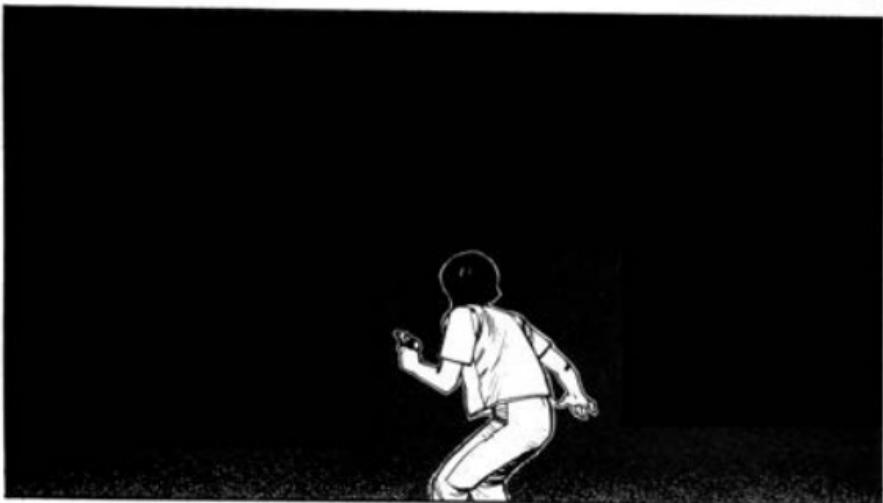




OKAY!
GO!!







THEY'RE STILL
CHECKING, SIR, BUT SO
FAR THERE'S BEEN NO
SIGN OF HER.



YOUR
OPINION
...?

WITHOUT PROPER
TESTS, THERE'S
NO POINT IN EVEN
SPECULATING ABOUT
WHETHER OR NOT
SHE HAS THE
POWER.



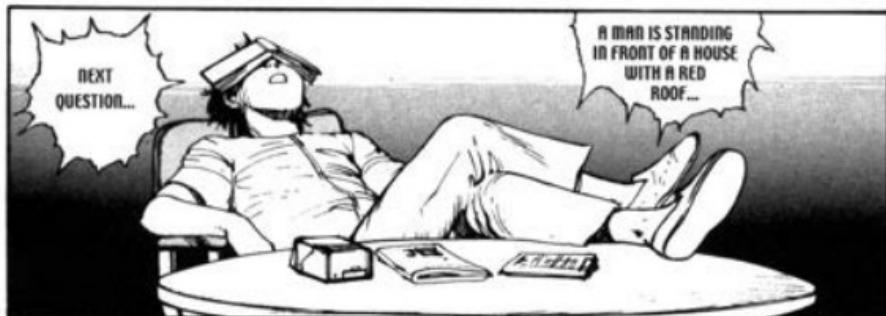
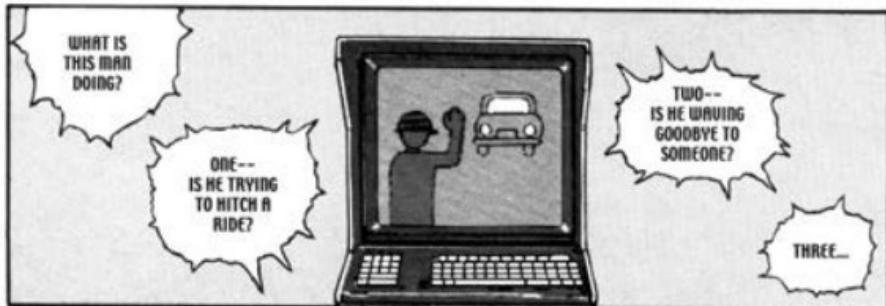
BUT, IF I MIGHT
SUGGEST...DIDN'T
YOU SAY SOME-
THING ABOUT A
BOY WHO WAS
BROUGHT IN
WITH HER...?

I'VE
ALREADY
ORDERED HIM
BROUGHT
HERE.



DAMN
!!











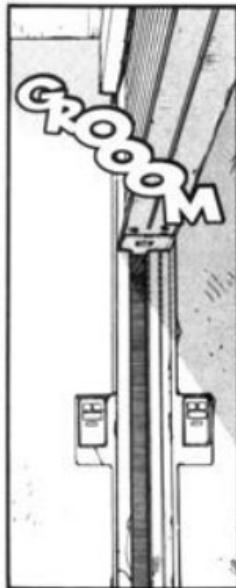


SO...
YOU WANNA
PLAY?



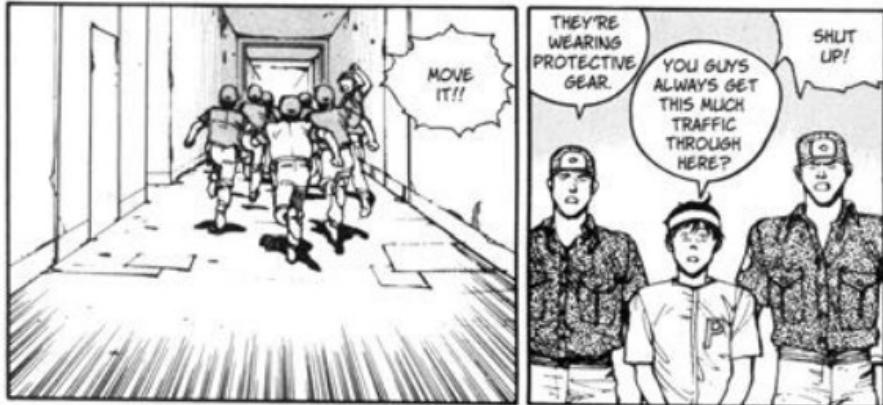
















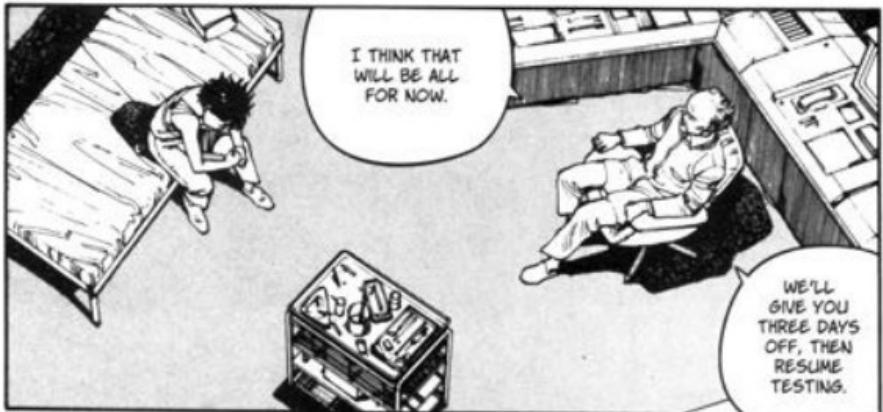












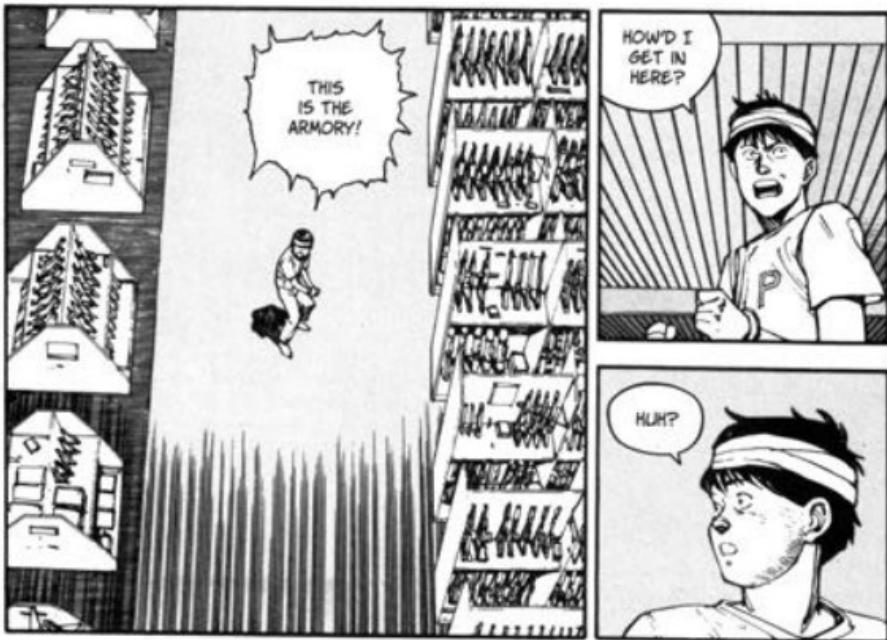


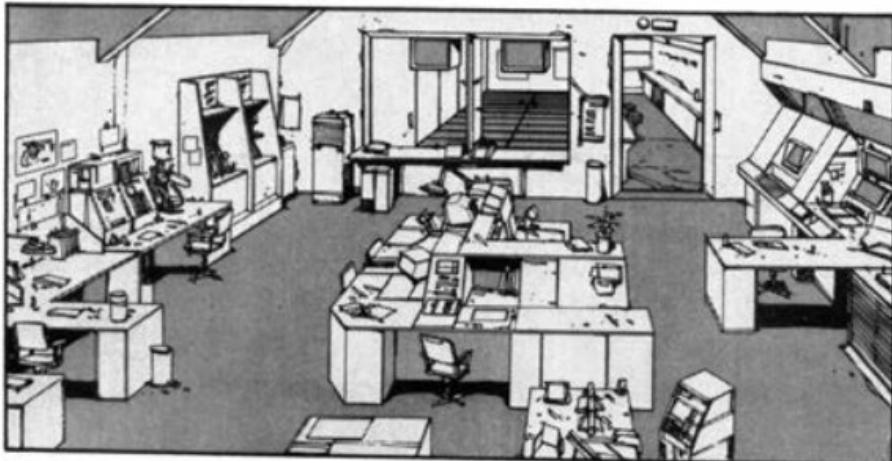


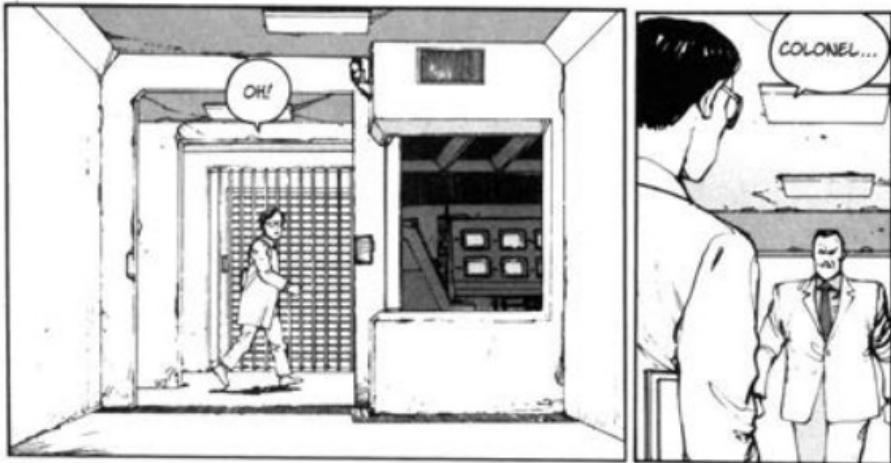
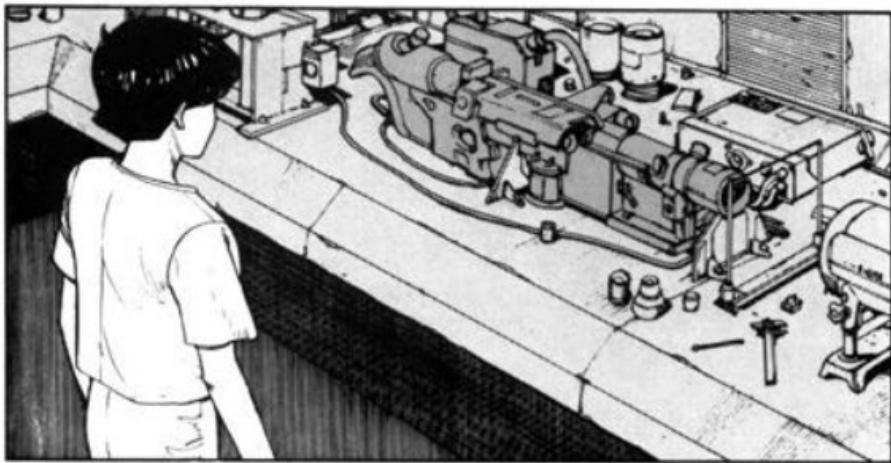


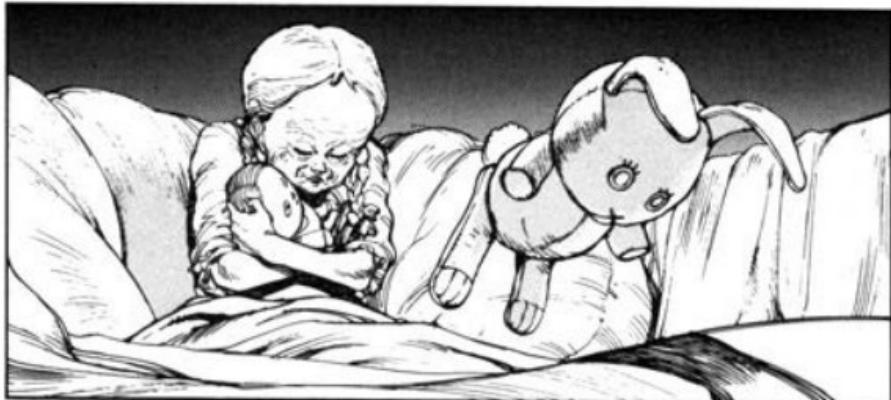


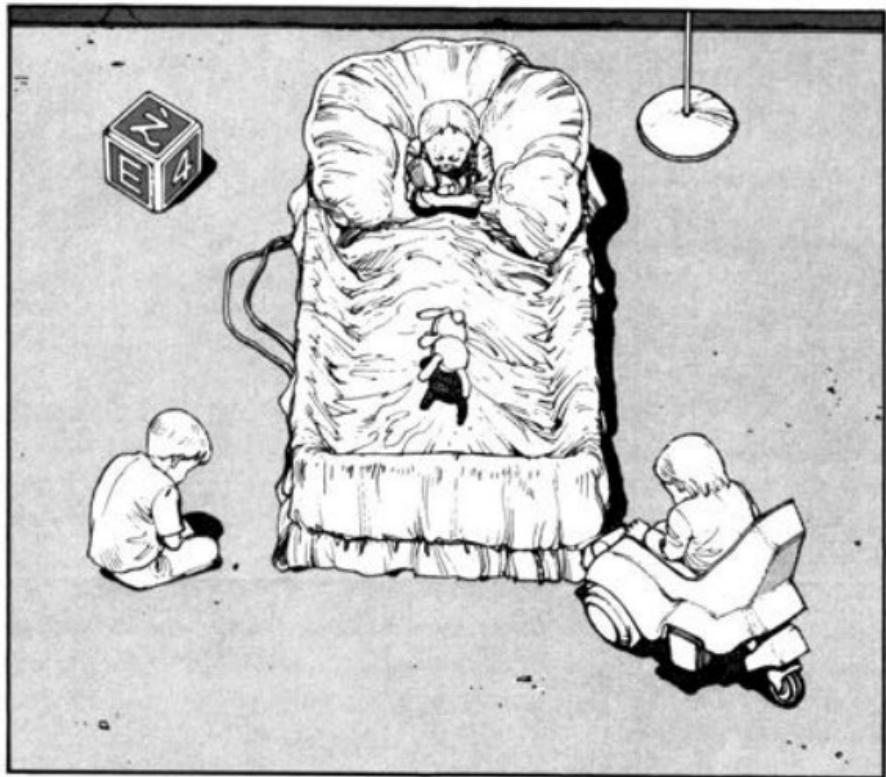


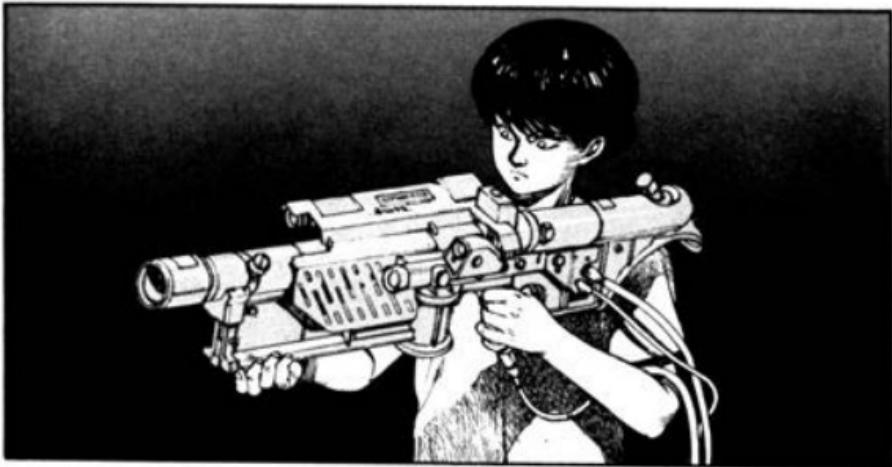














WHAT DO YOU THINK
YOU'RE DOING?













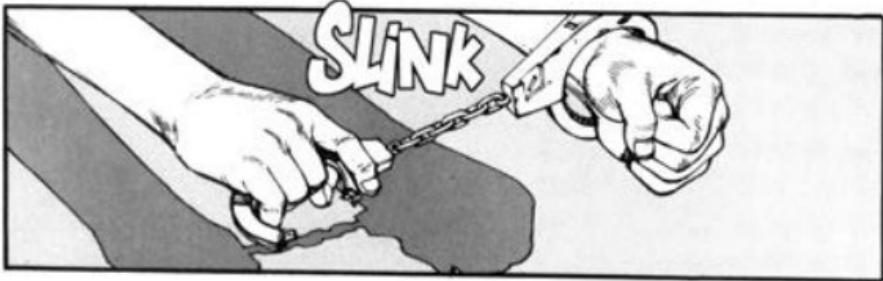
















IN ANY CASE, IT'S
TIME FOR YOU
TO LEAVE...
TETSUO.



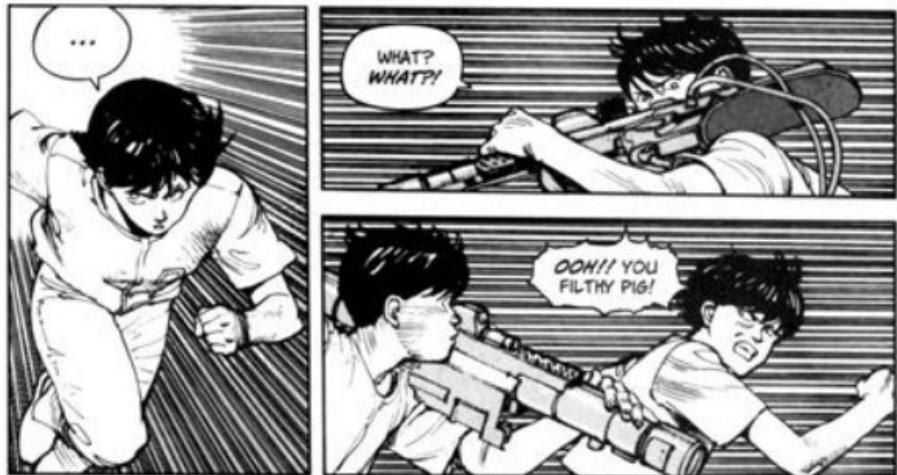
YES,
SIR! I'M
VERY
SORRY,
SIR!



I'VE
GOT OTHER
THINGS TO
WORRY ABOUT
RIGHT NOW, BUT
I'M HOLDING
YOU FULLY
RESPONSIBLE
FOR THIS,
DOCTOR!!







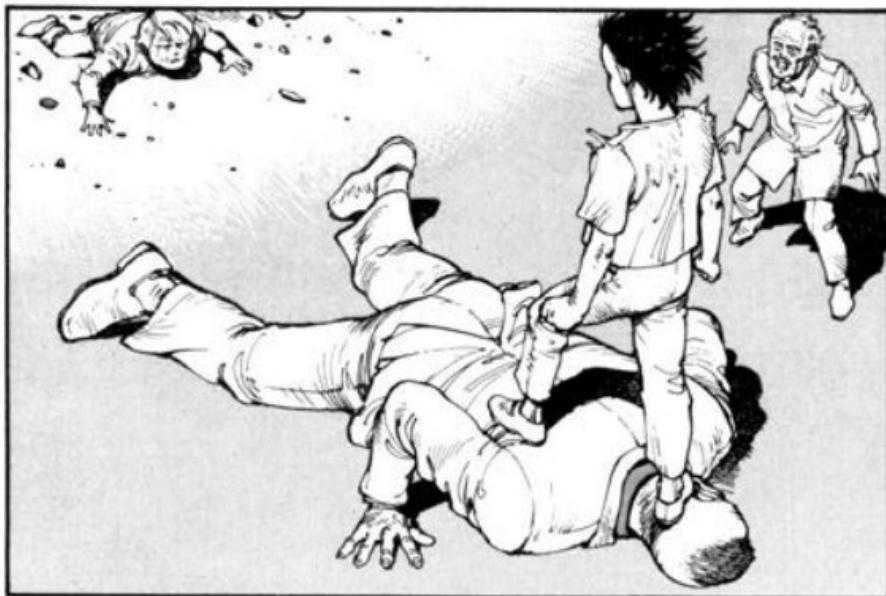




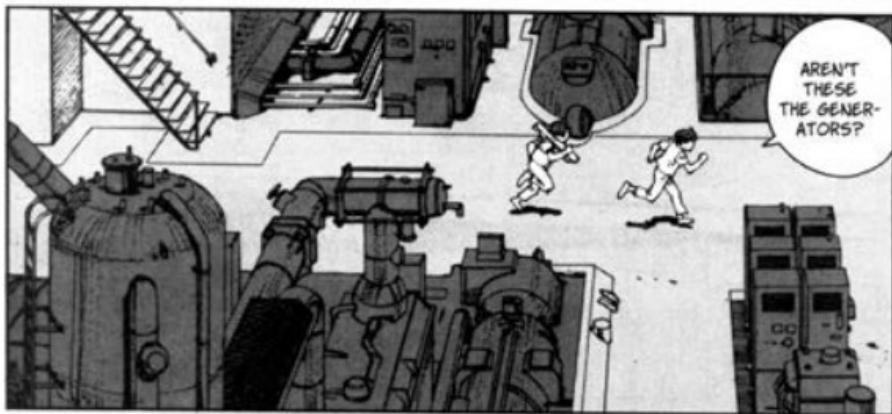




















OUR PROBLEMS
WITH AKIRA HAVE
HELD UP THIS
PROJECT SINCE THE
WAR! OF COURSE
THERE'D BE
A DELAY...

...WHILE
WE STUDY
NUMBER 41,
BUT...

...WE CAN'T
THROW AWAY
OUR FIRST CHANCE
IN THIRTY YEARS
TO MASTER
AKIRA!

SHUFFE!
SHUFFE!



SHUFFE



THIS WAY!
QUICKLY!

I DON'T
KNOW HOW
I KNOW!
I JUST
KNOW!

HOW
DO YOU
KNOW?

I SAID...
NO!!!

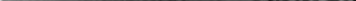
THE RISK IS
TOO GREAT! WE
CAN'T AWAKEN AKIRA
WHILE THERE'S THE
SLIGHTEST
DOUBT!

LET
ME TRY! I'LL
ASSUME FULL
RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE SAFETY
FACTOR!

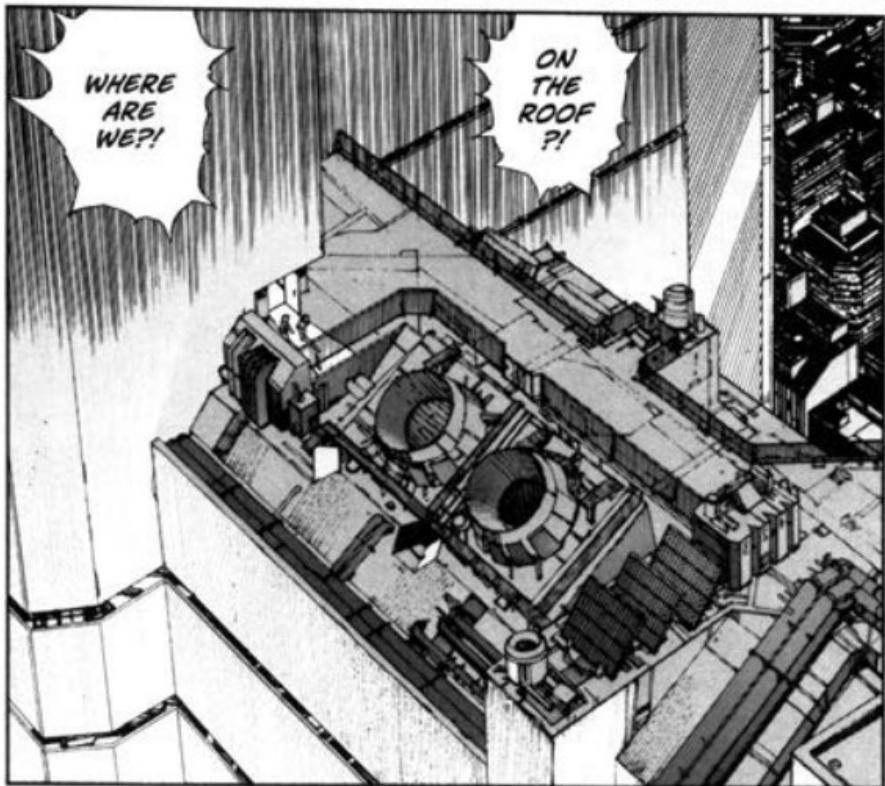
BETTER
HURRY IT
UP...

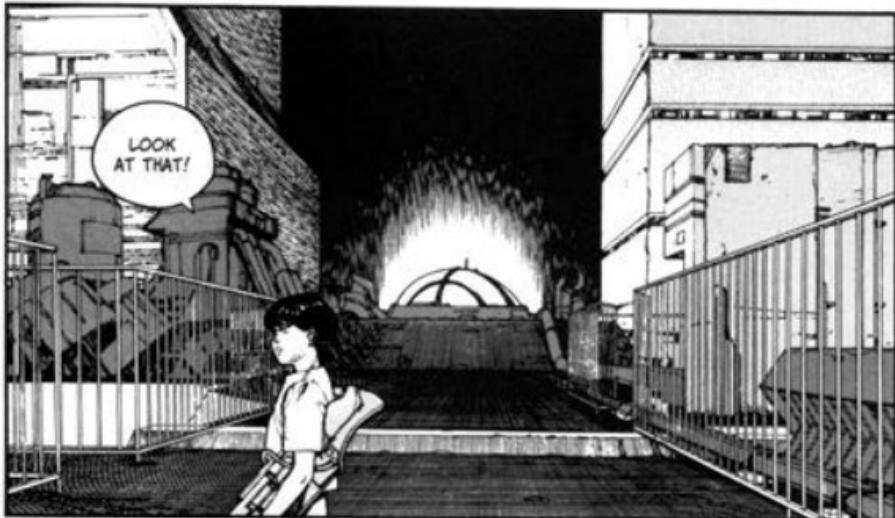
PLEASE,
COLONEL!

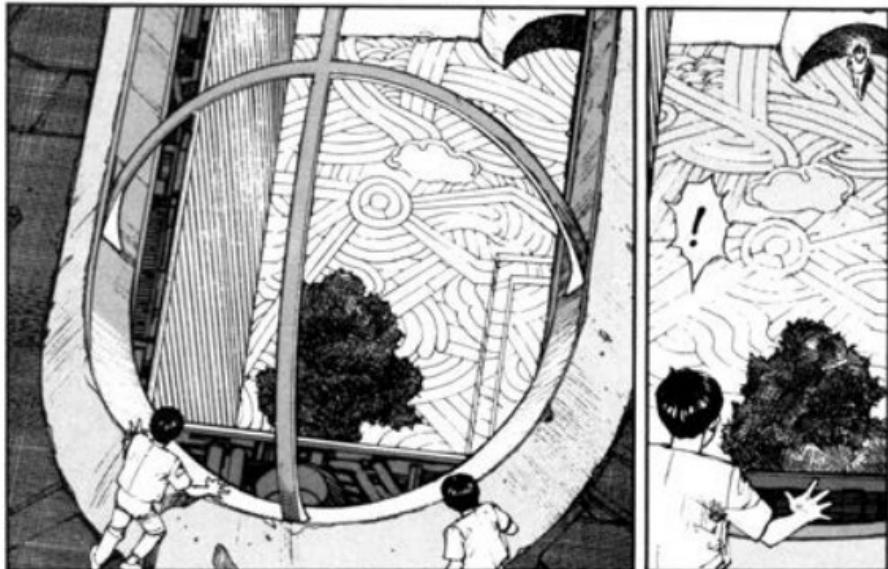
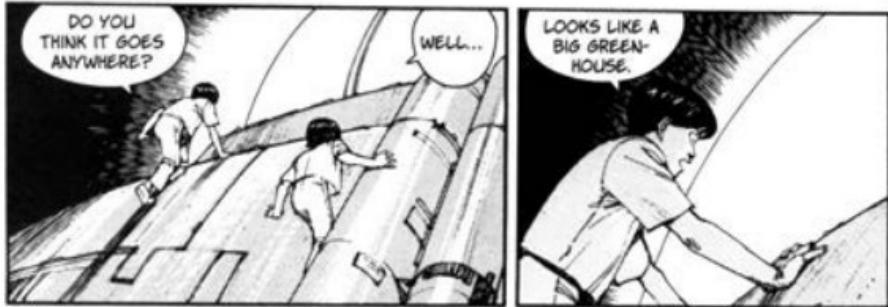
TRUST ME!!
THIS IS THE
CULMINATION
OF EVERYTHING
I'VE WORKED
AND STUDIED
FOR!



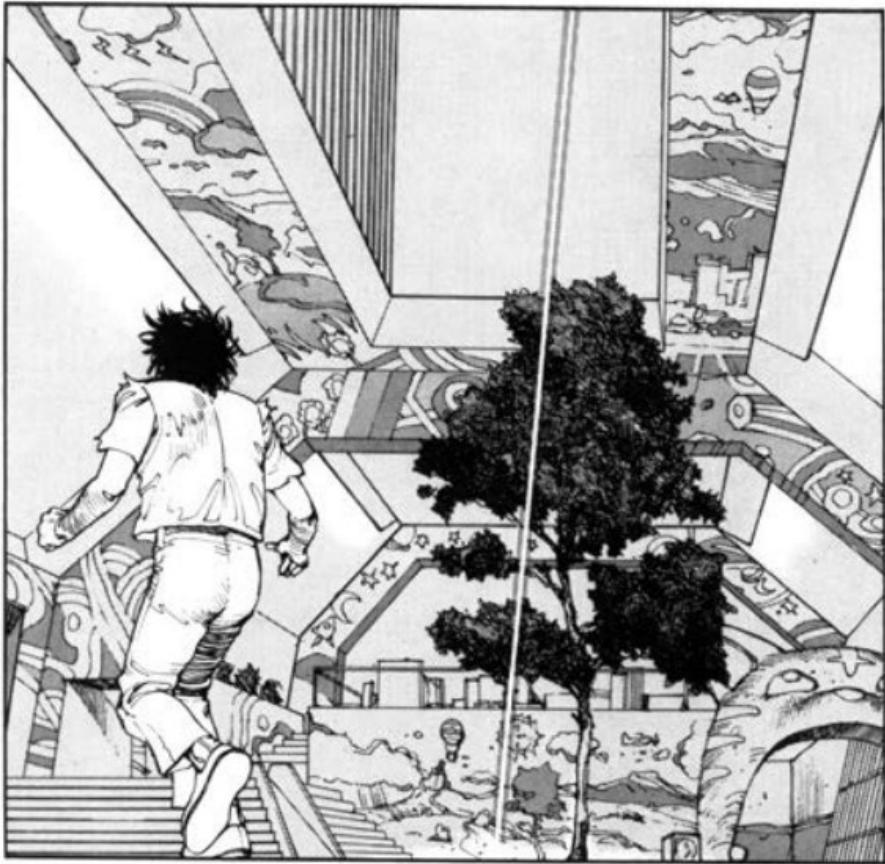




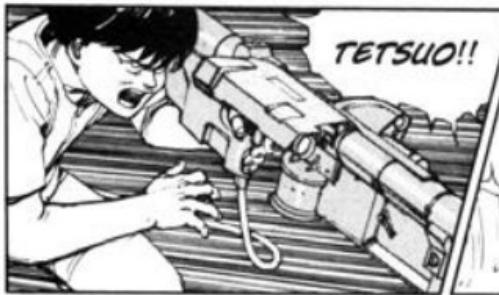








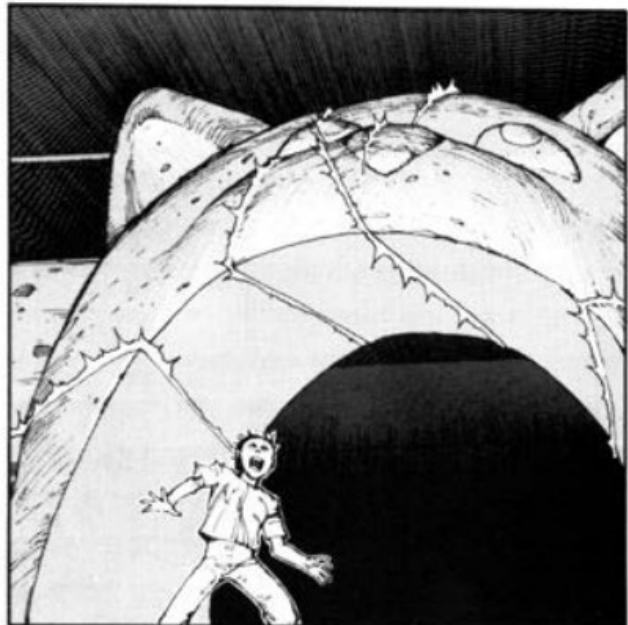




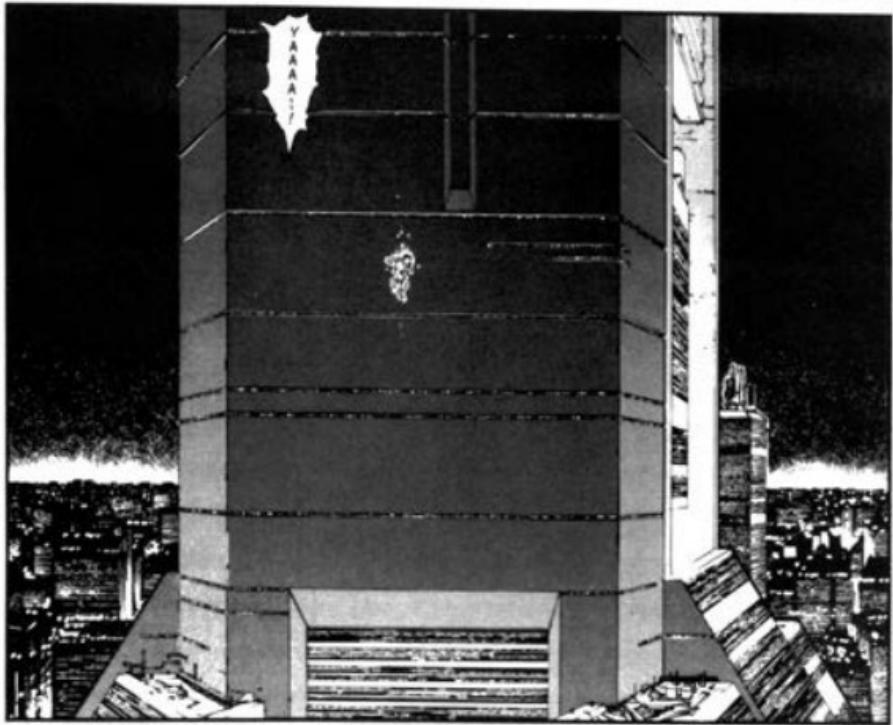






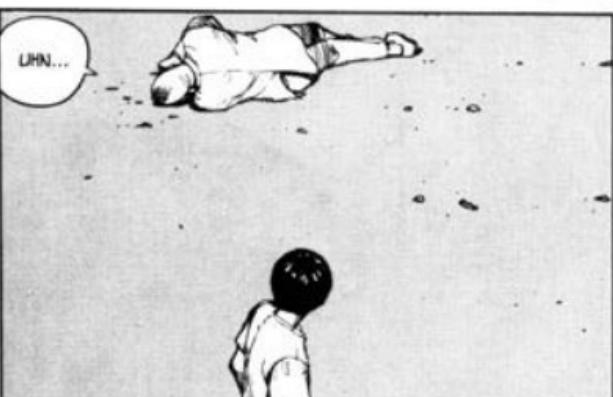




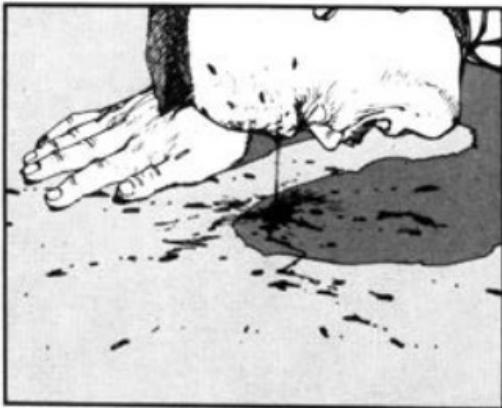














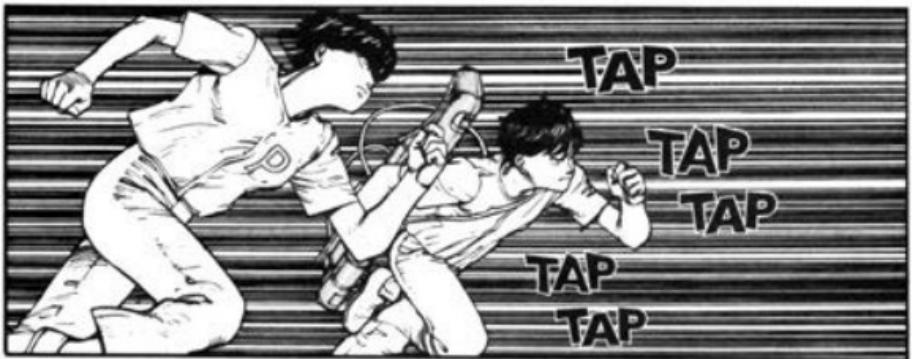






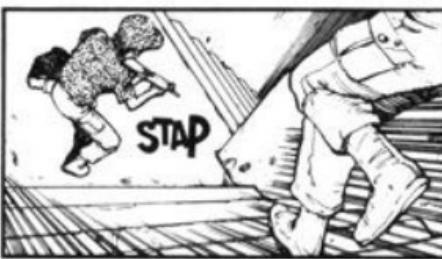






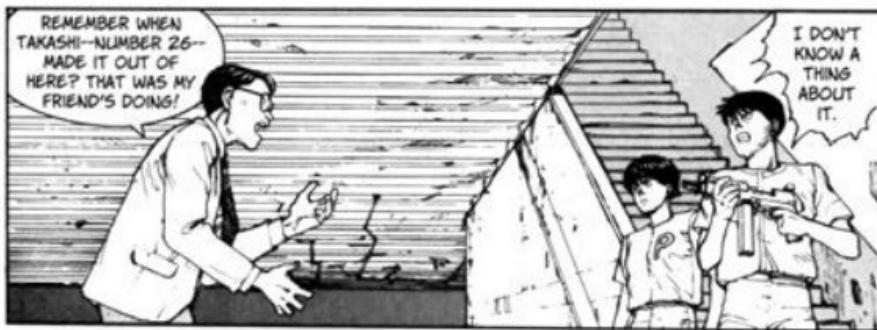


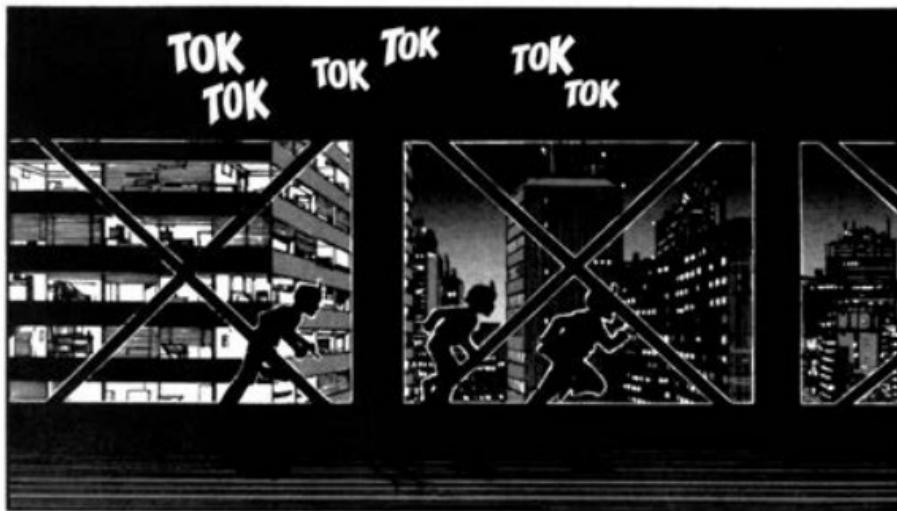


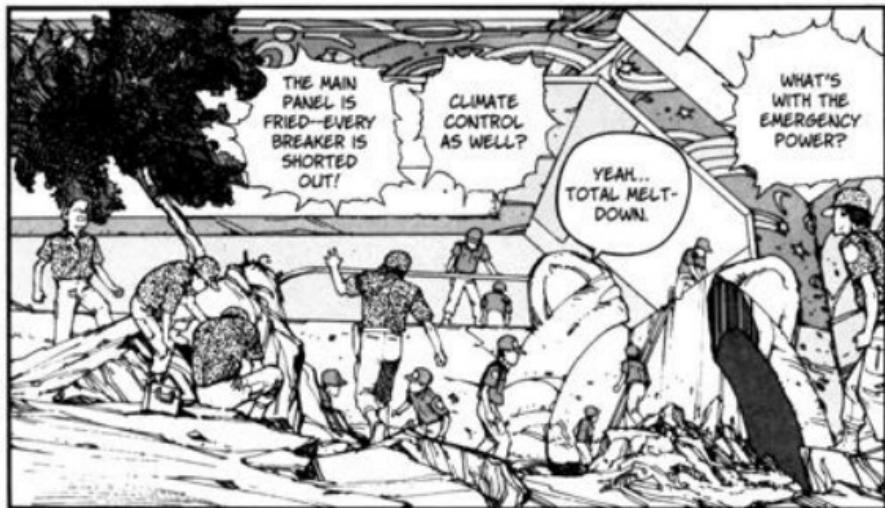




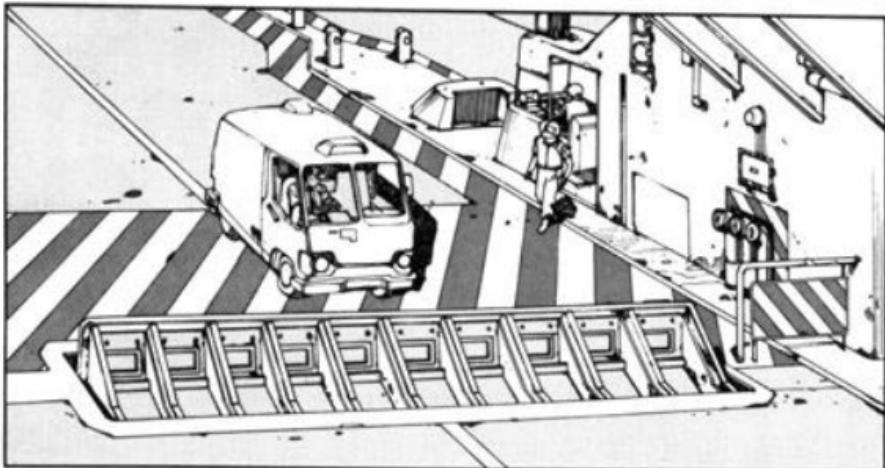
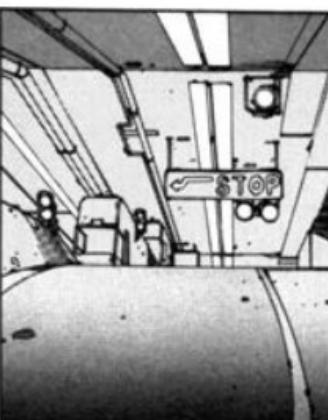
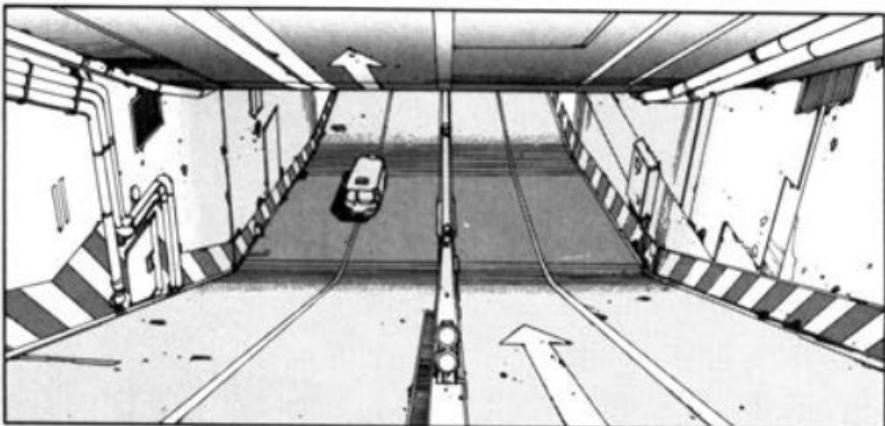


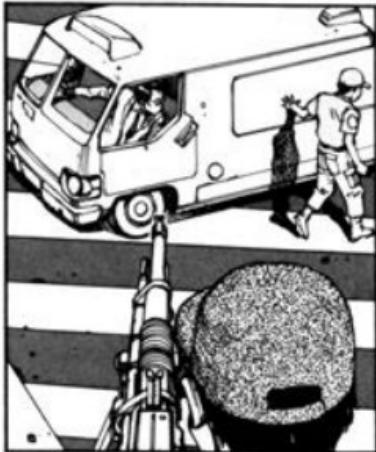


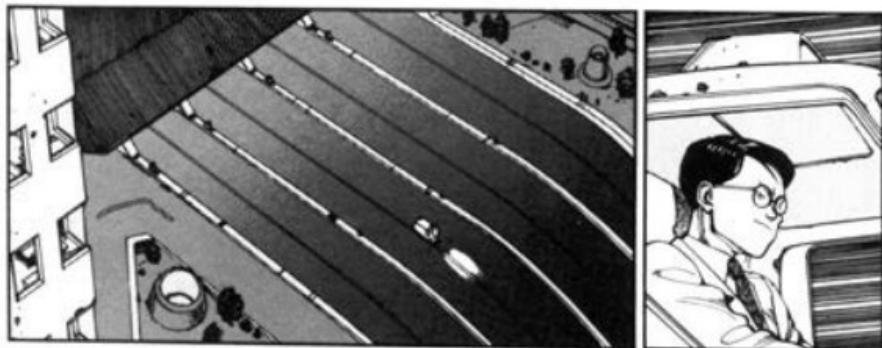






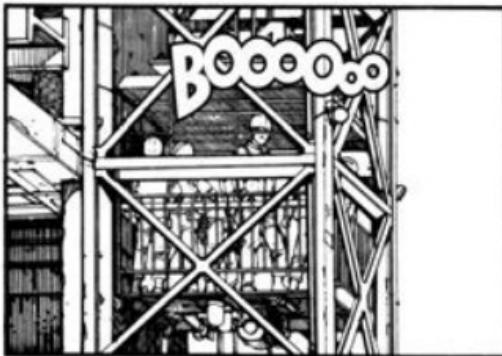


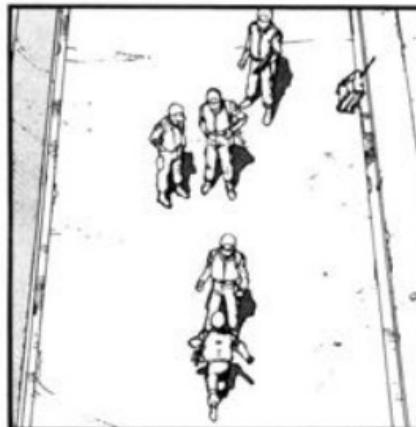
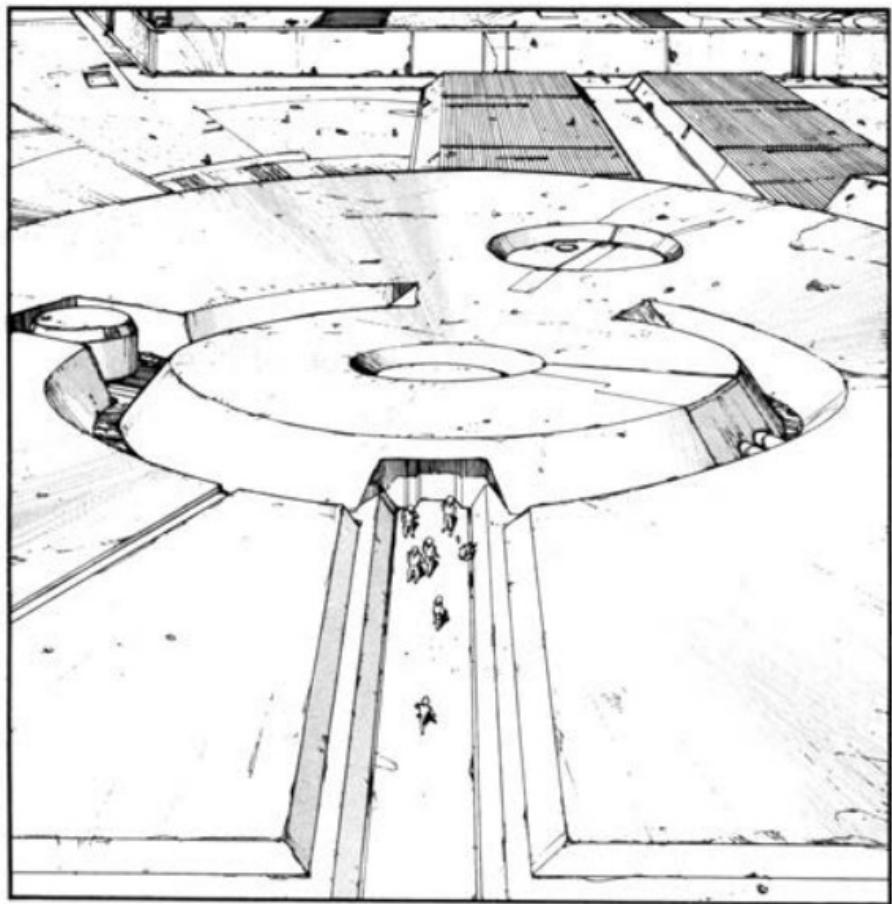






BANG KLAN
KLONG
KLONG

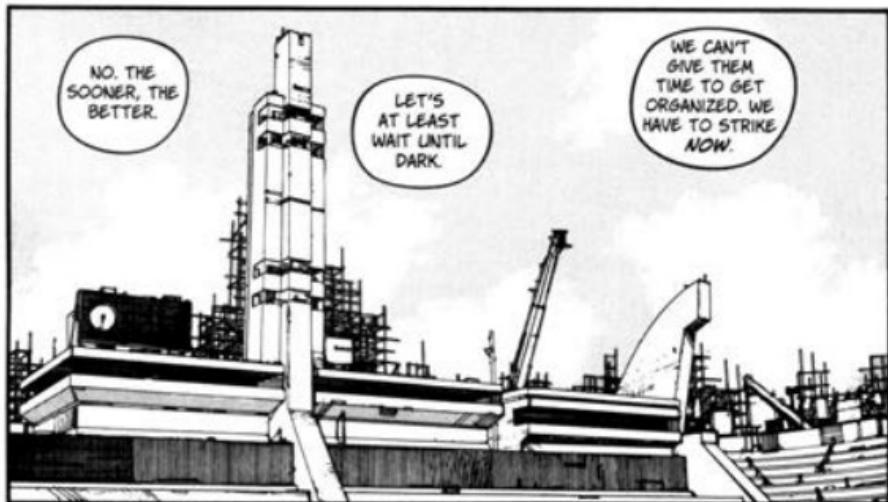






BROO



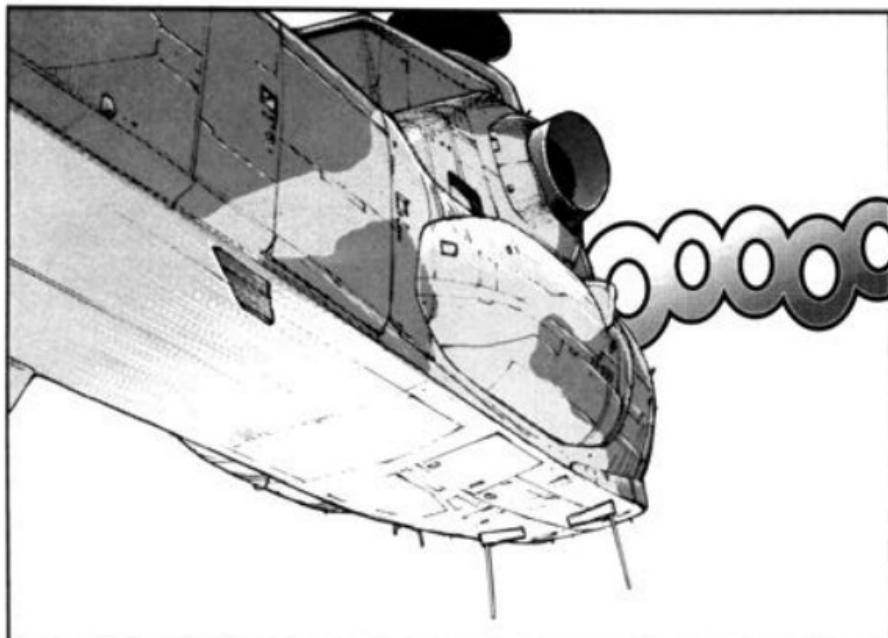




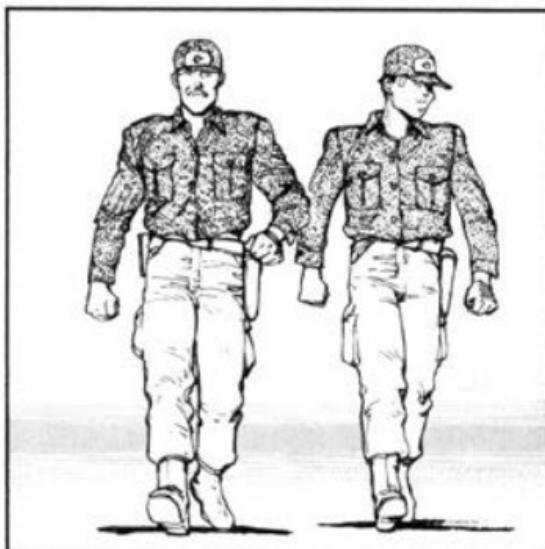
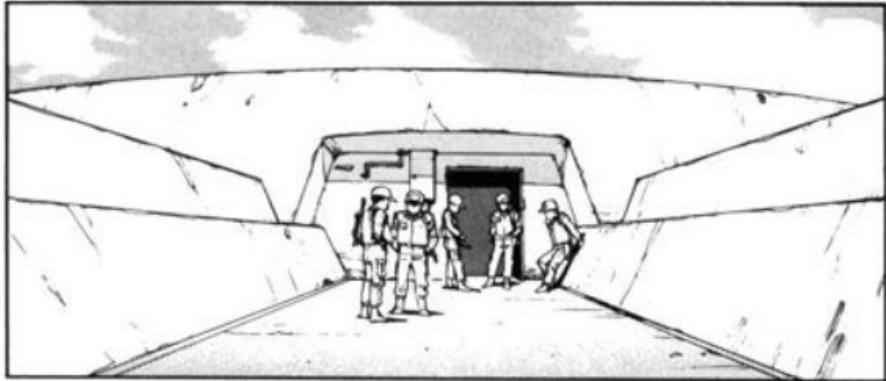


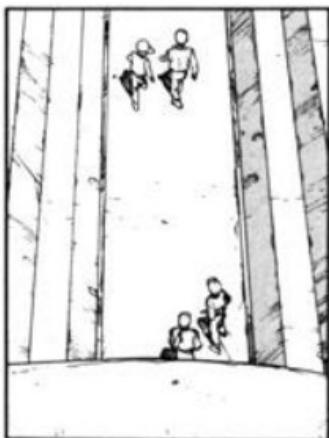
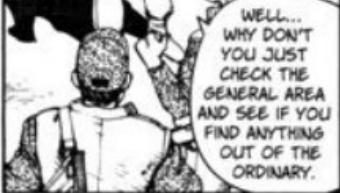


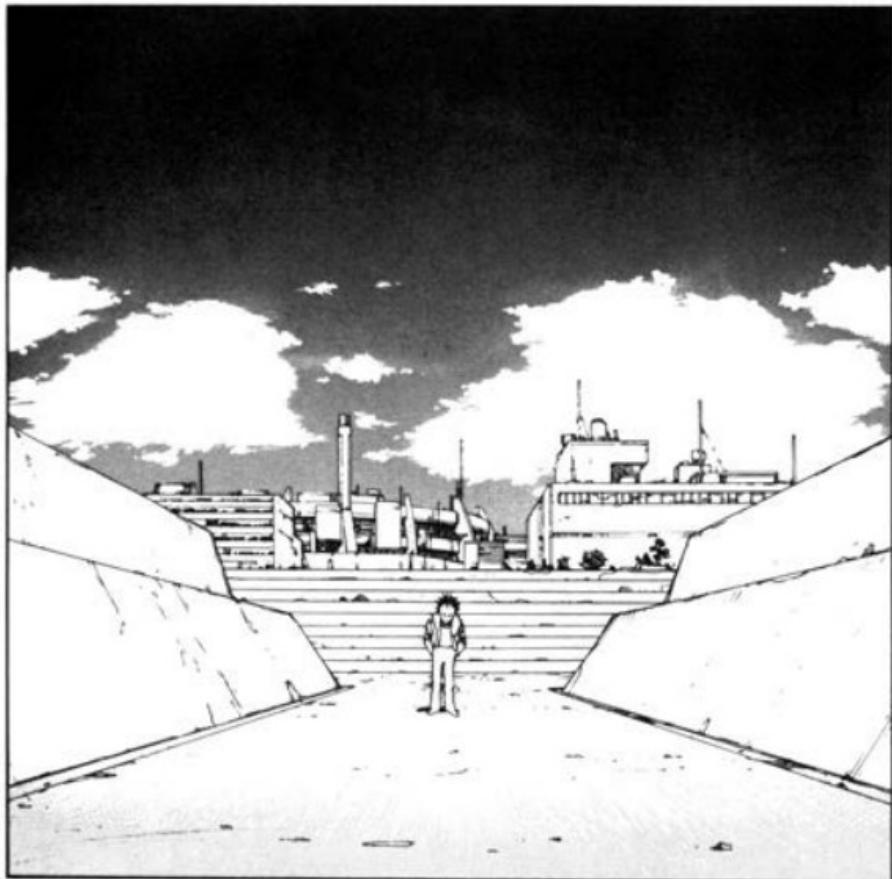


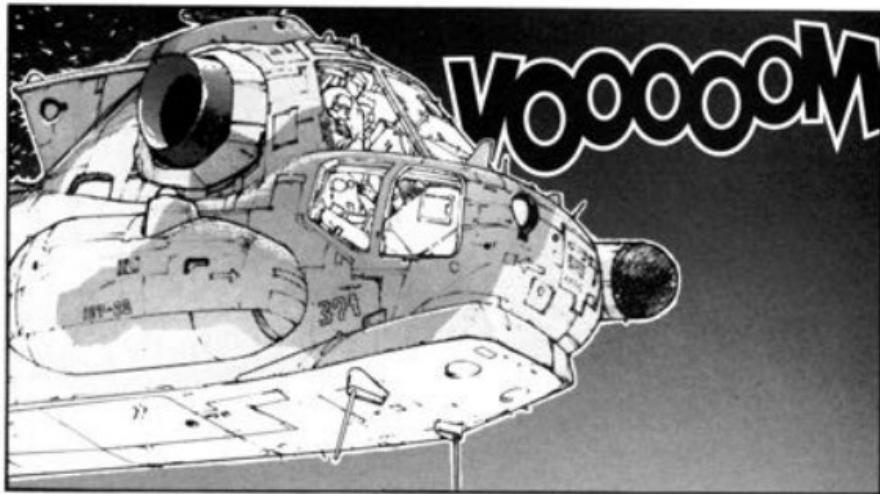


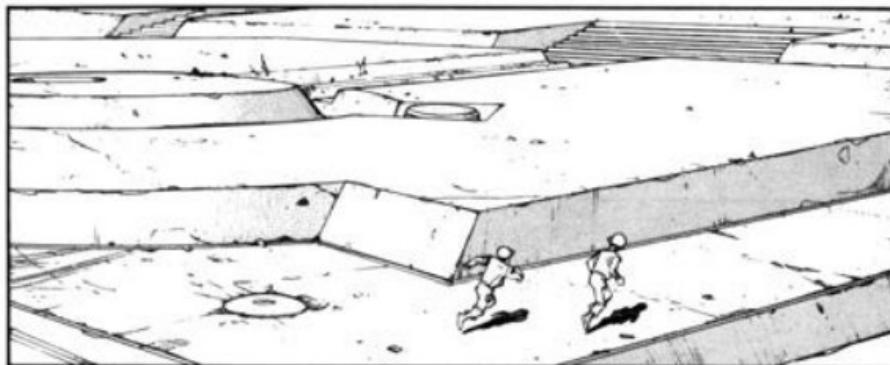


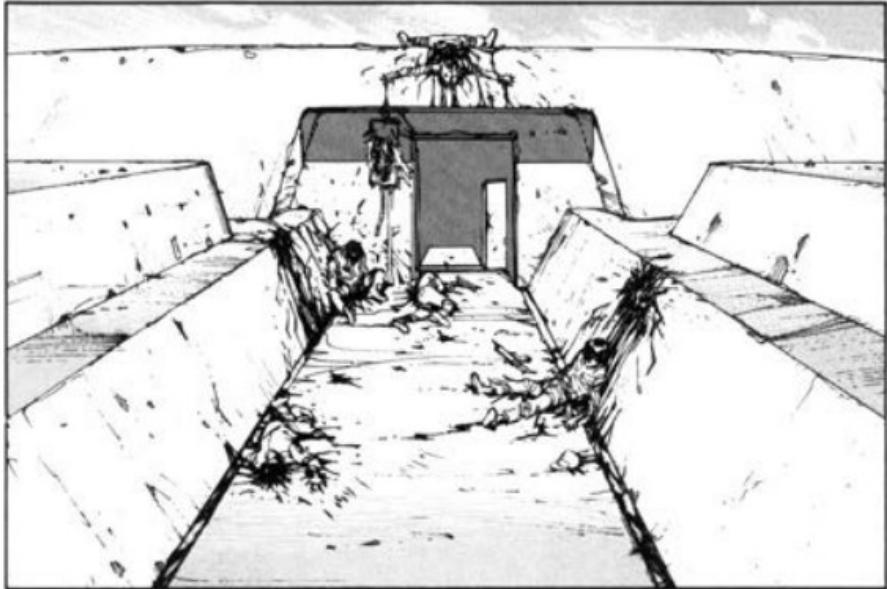




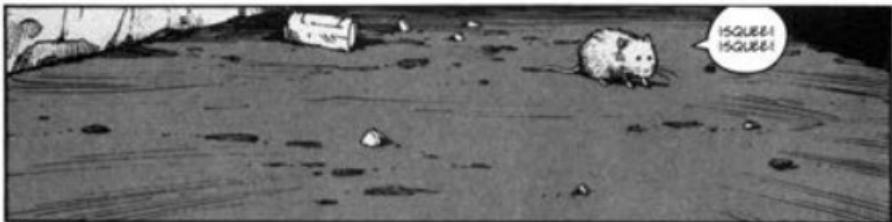


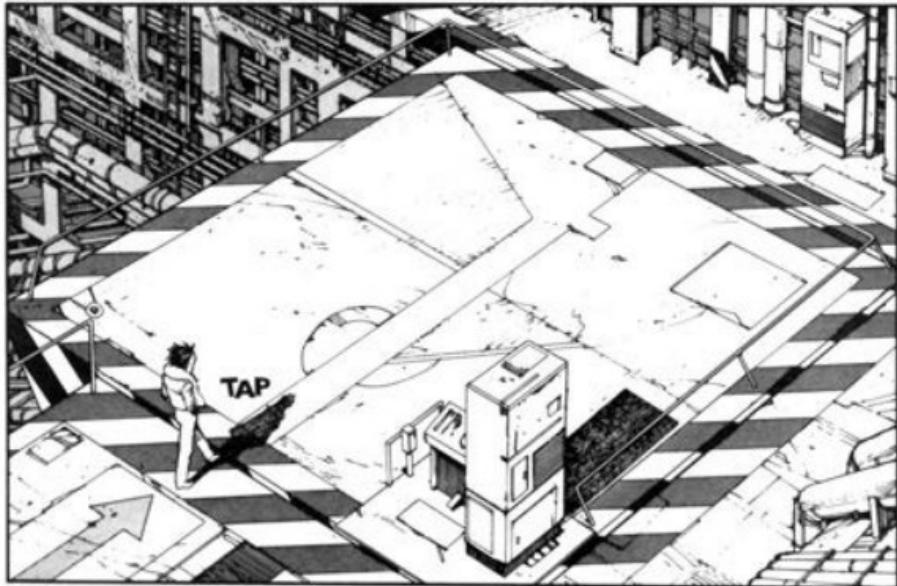


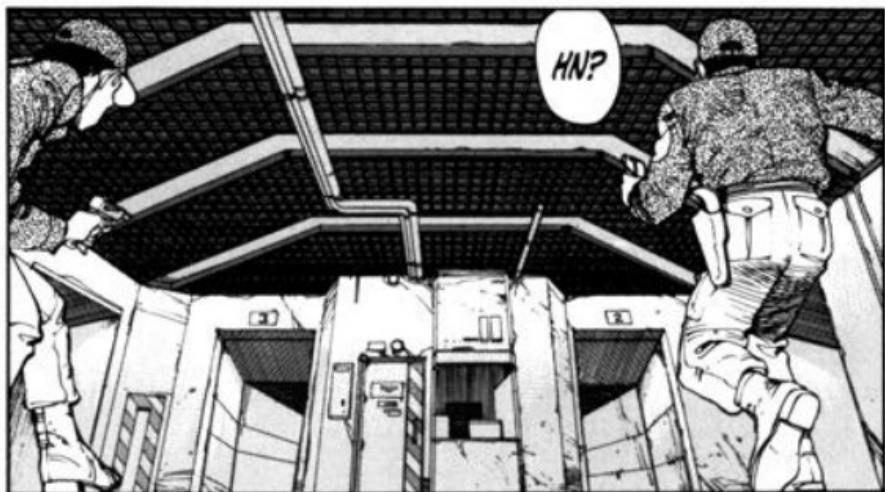


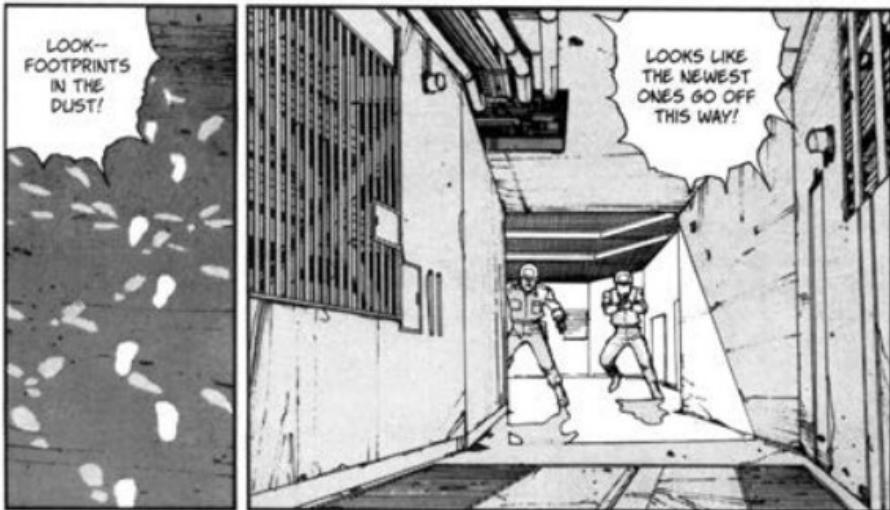


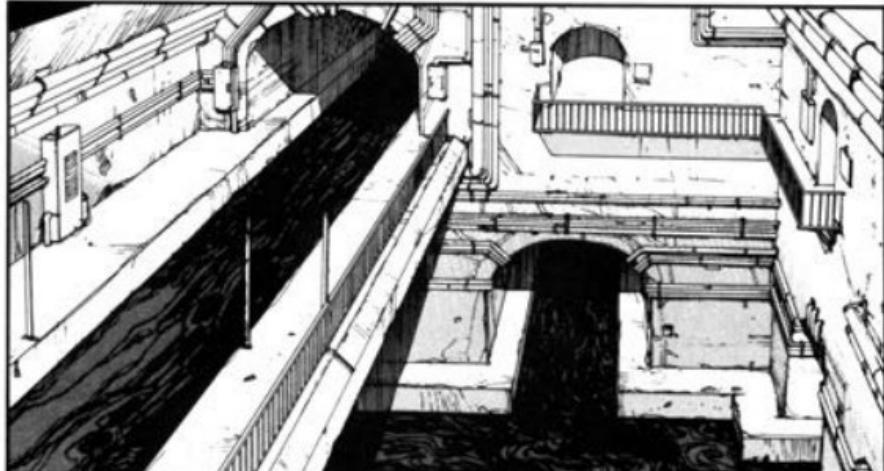






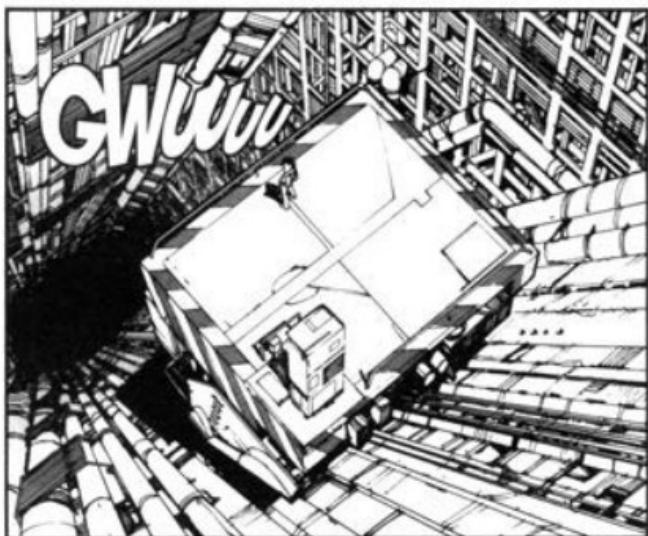
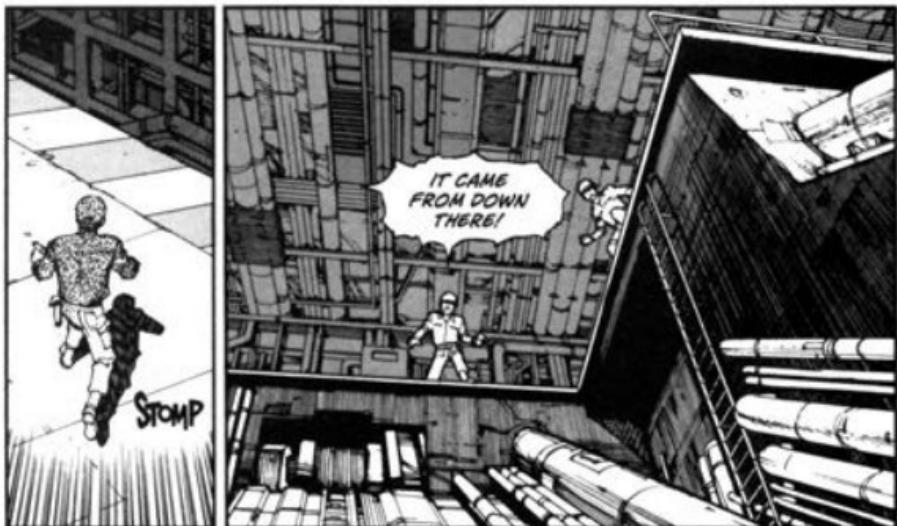








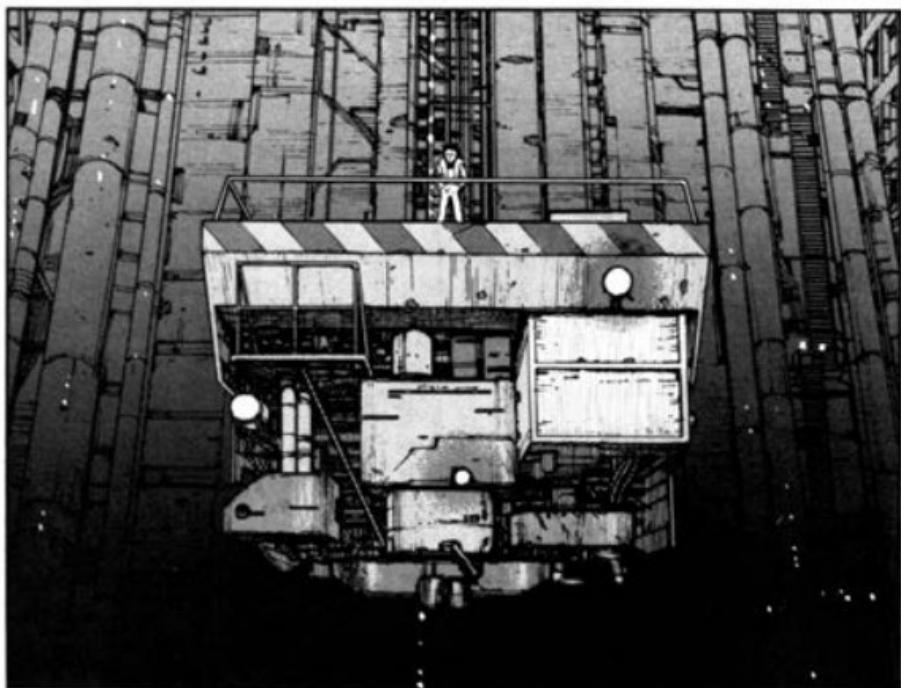
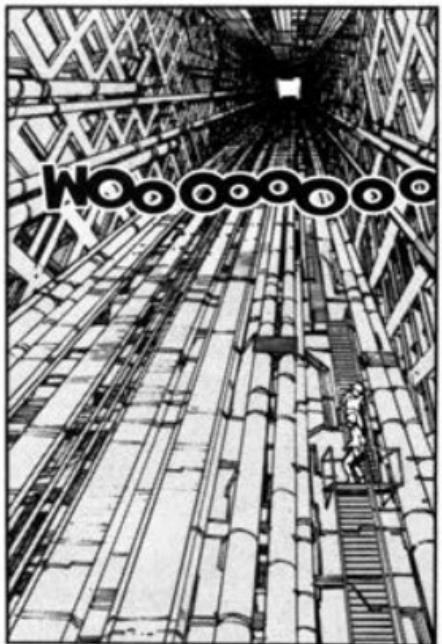


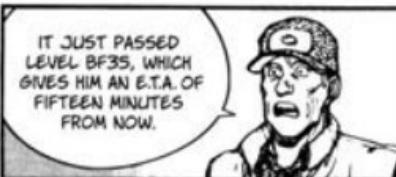


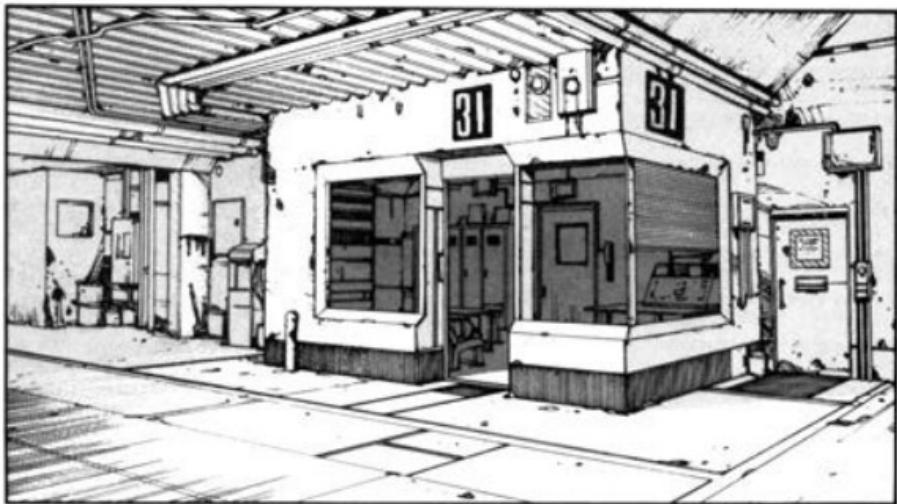














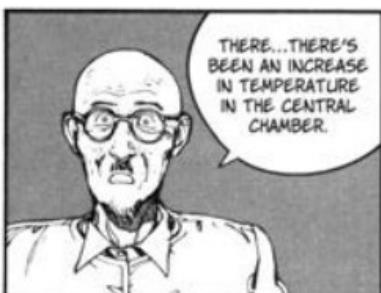




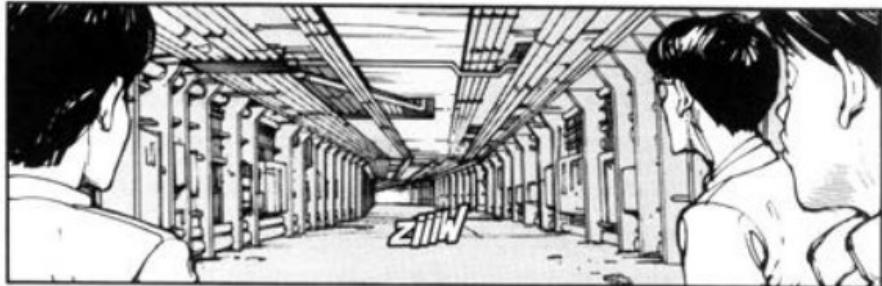




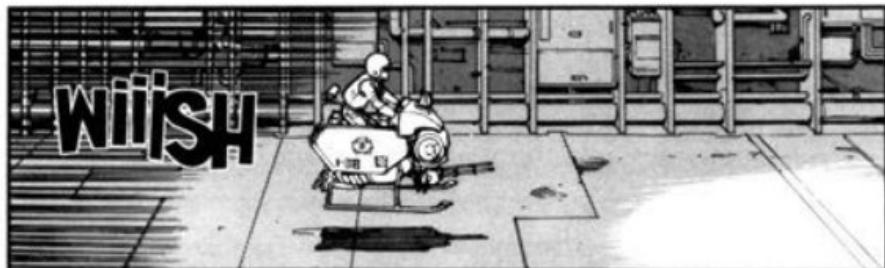


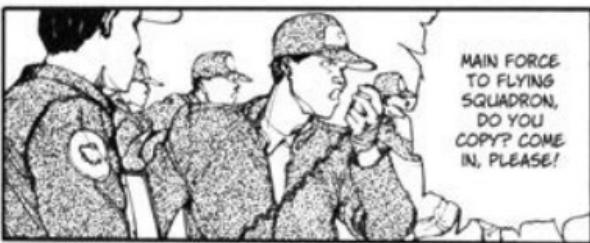
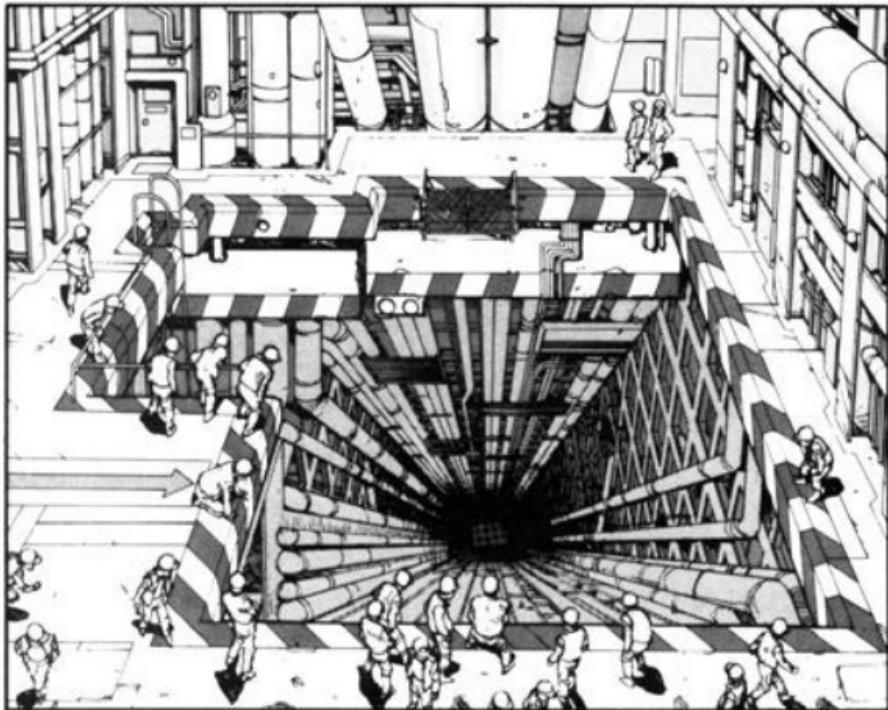


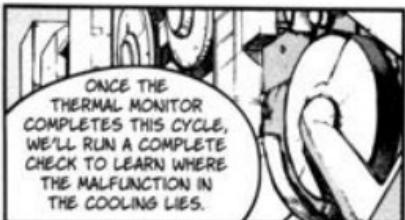


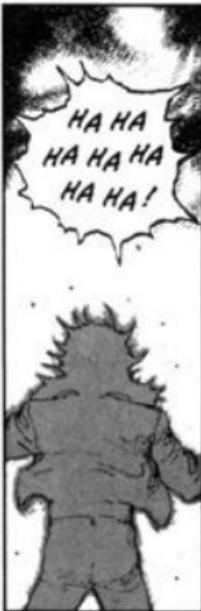








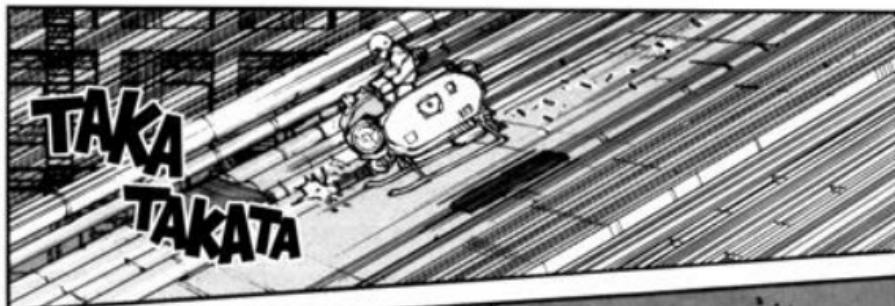




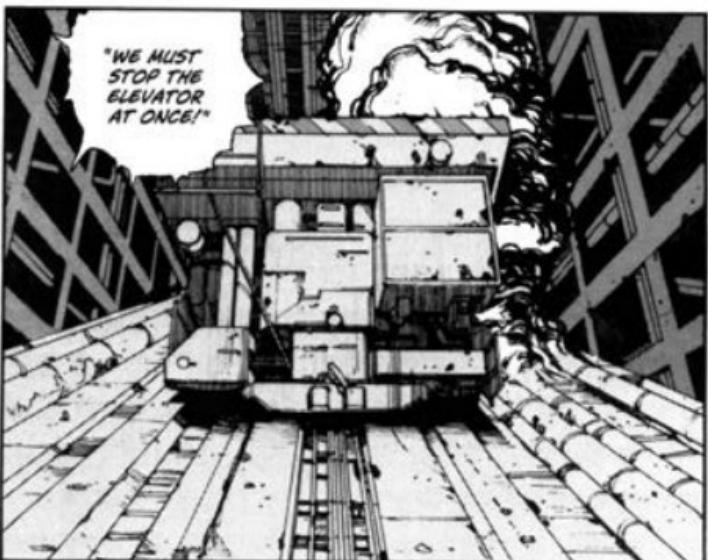




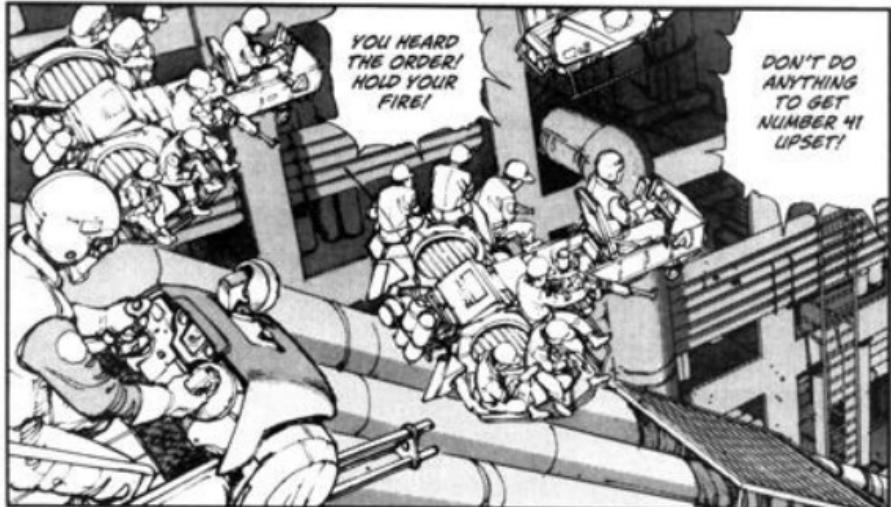
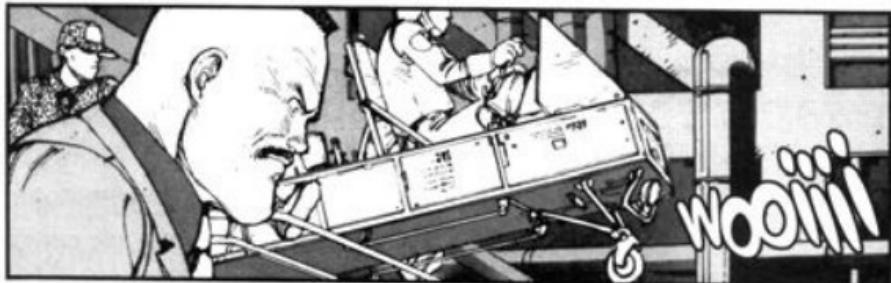
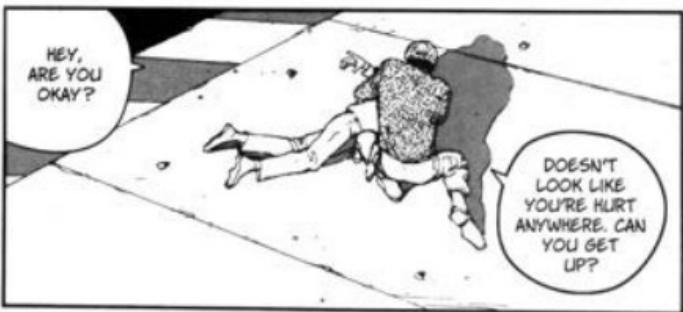




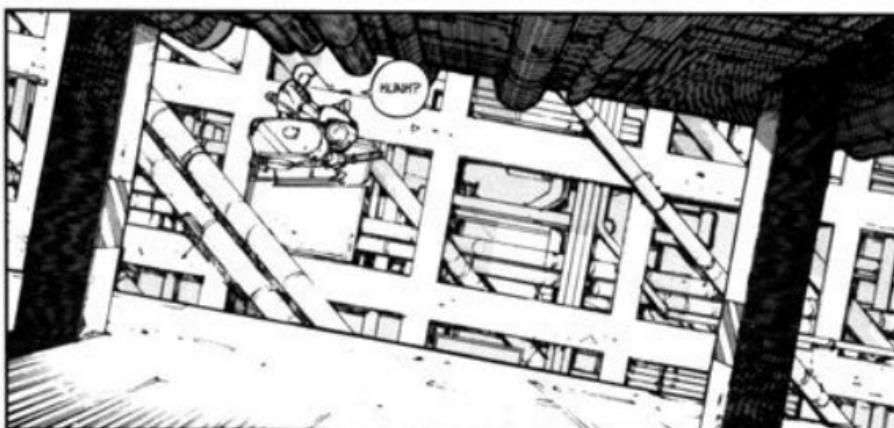


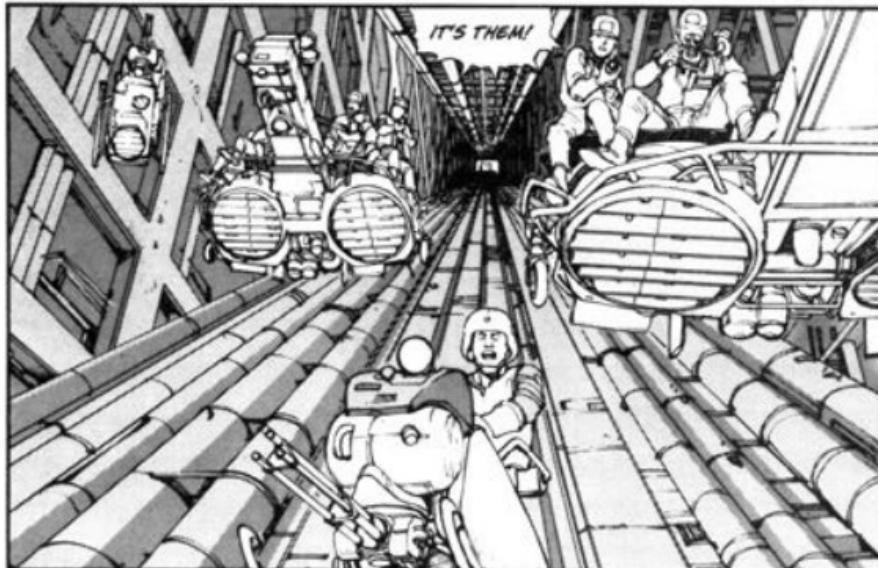




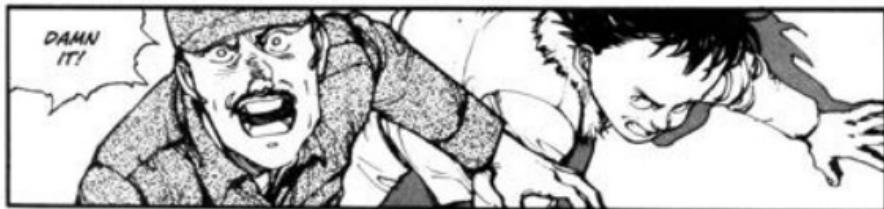






















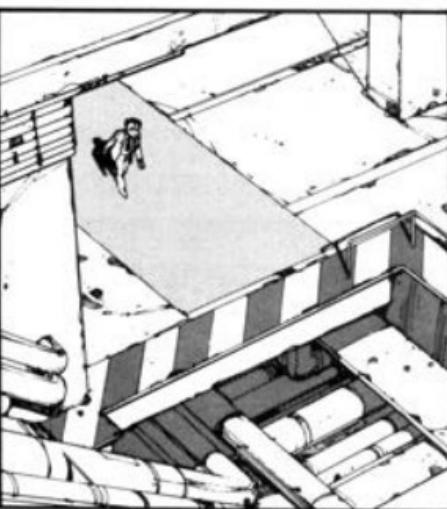


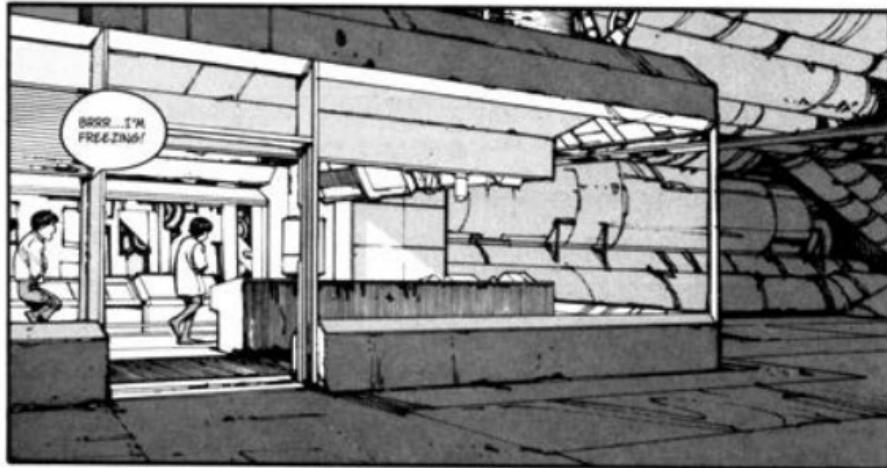


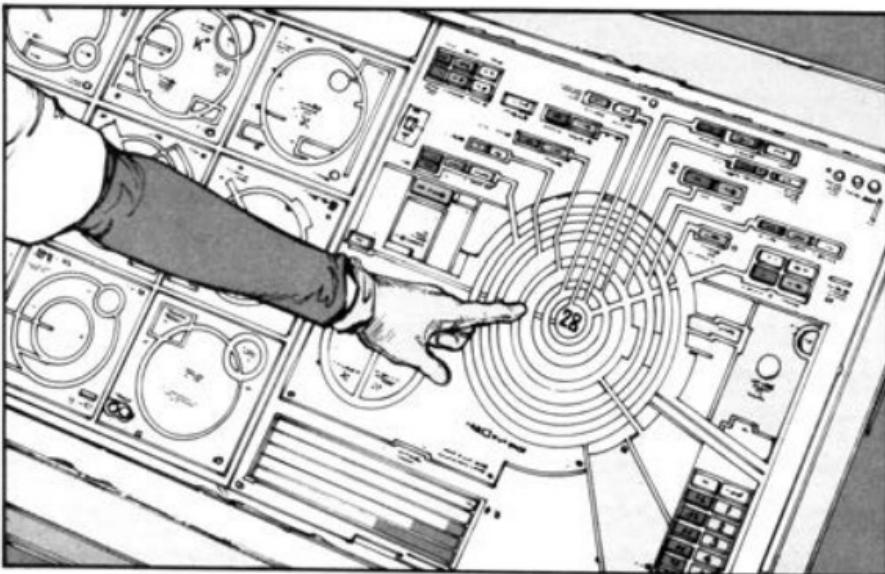






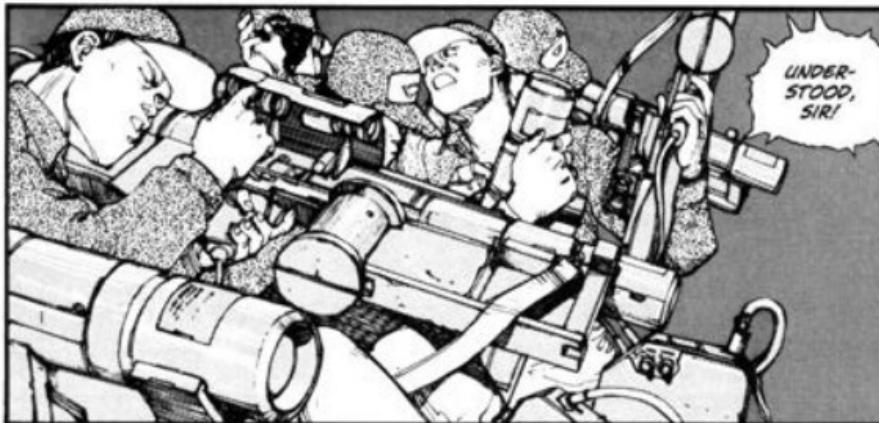
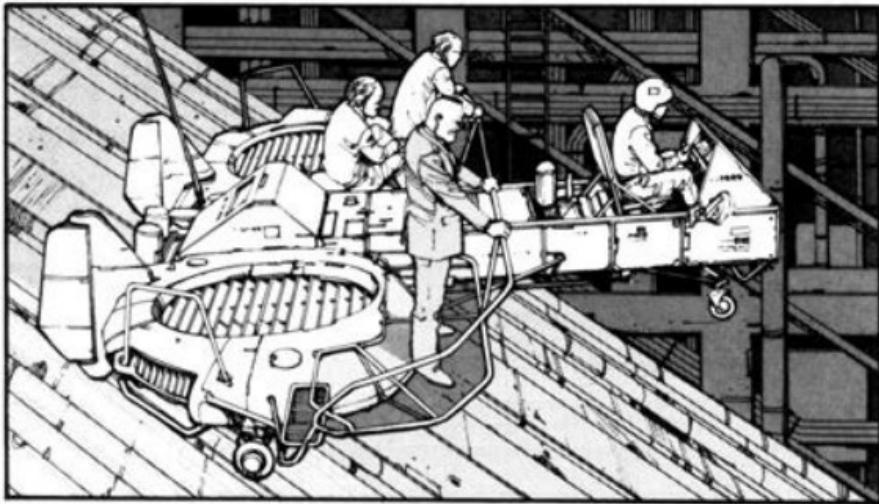






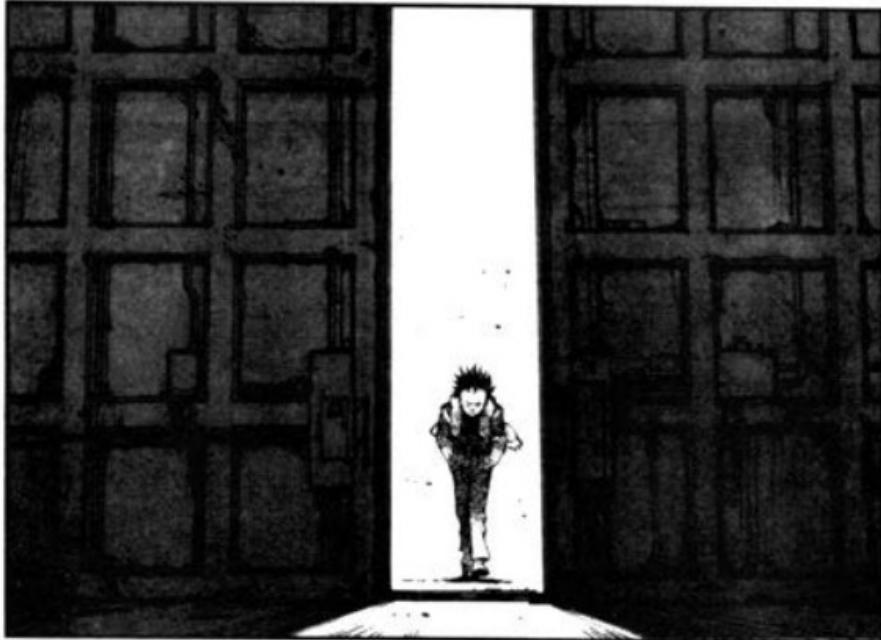


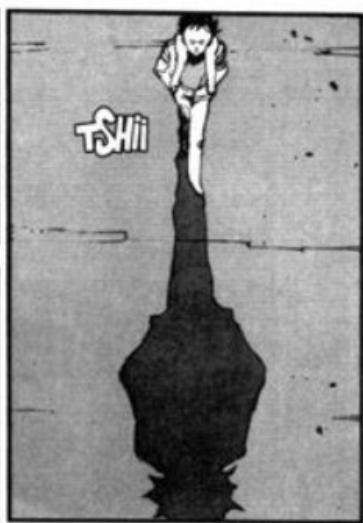


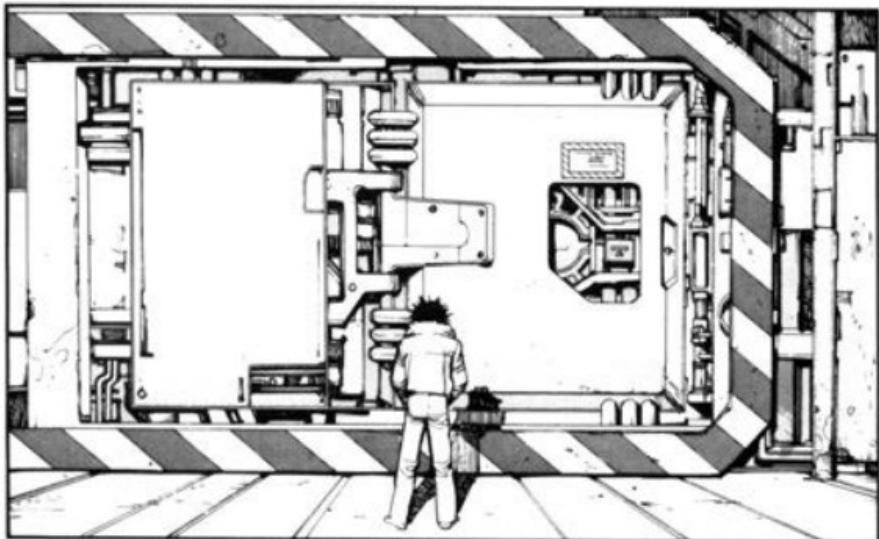




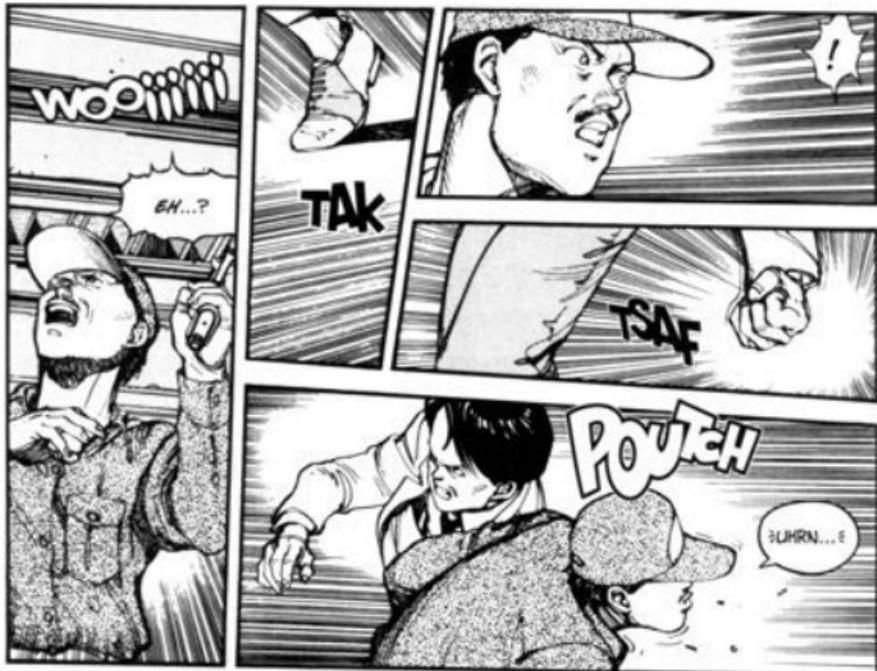
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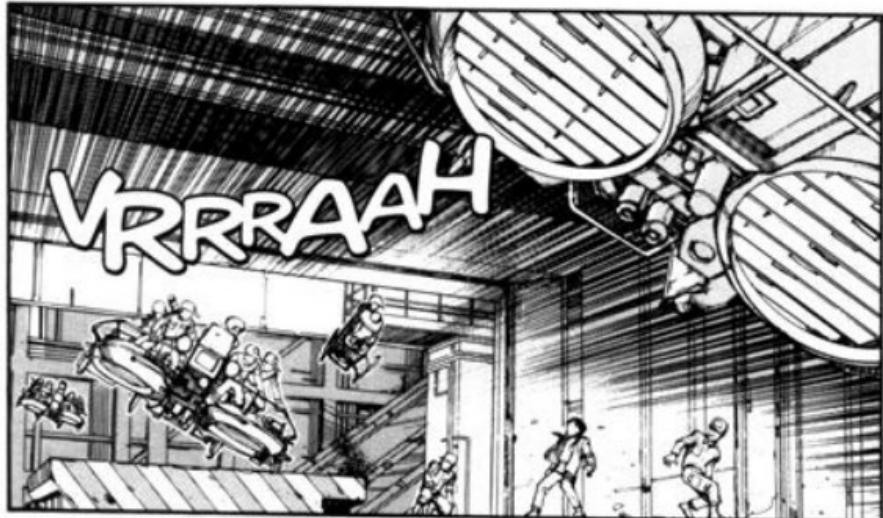


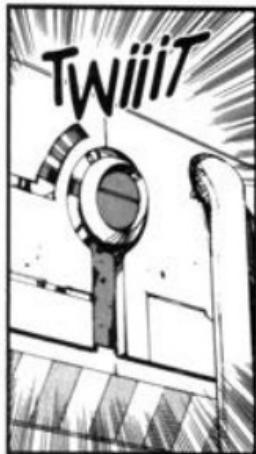


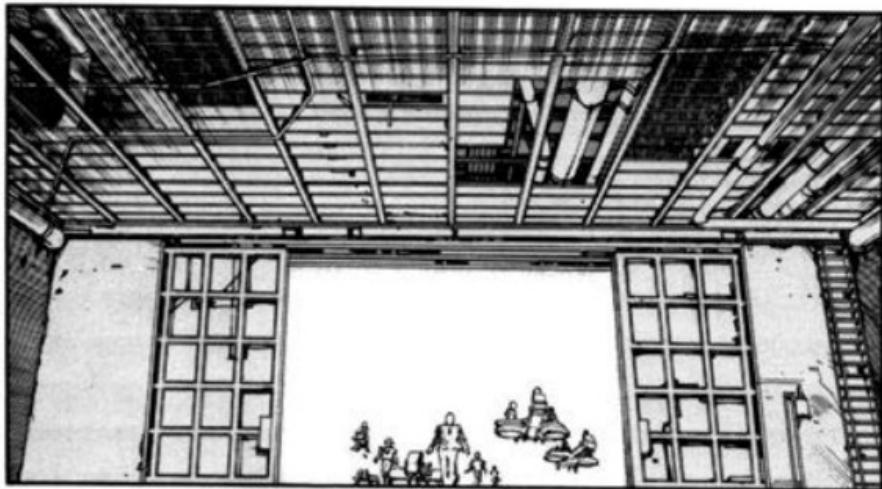






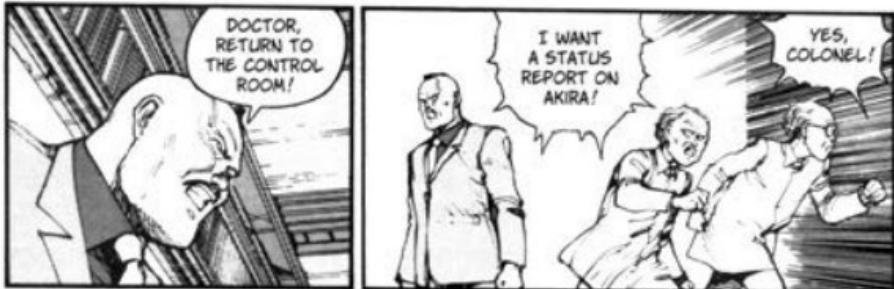
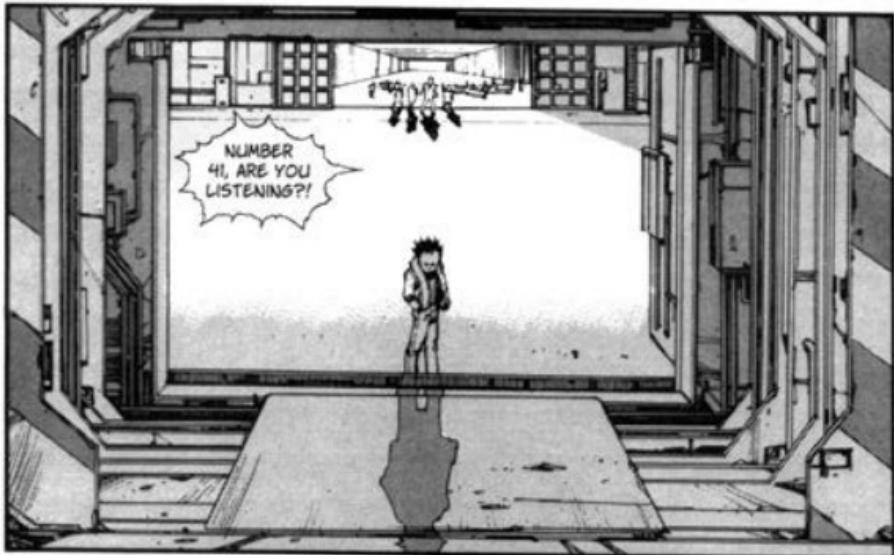


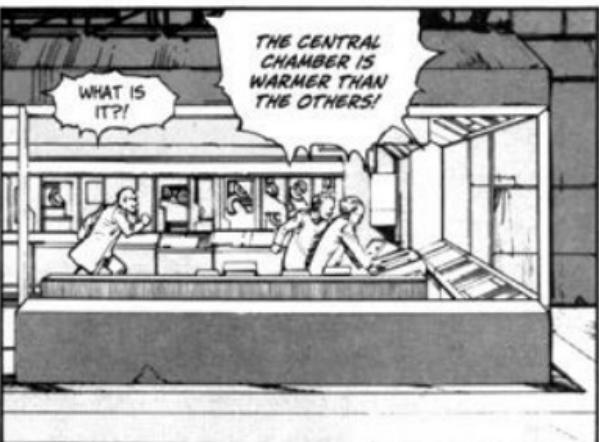


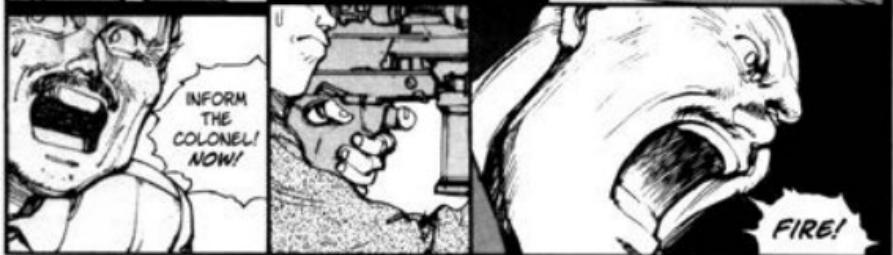


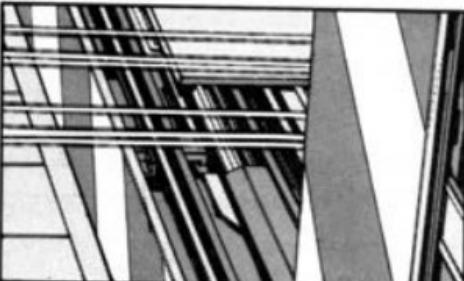




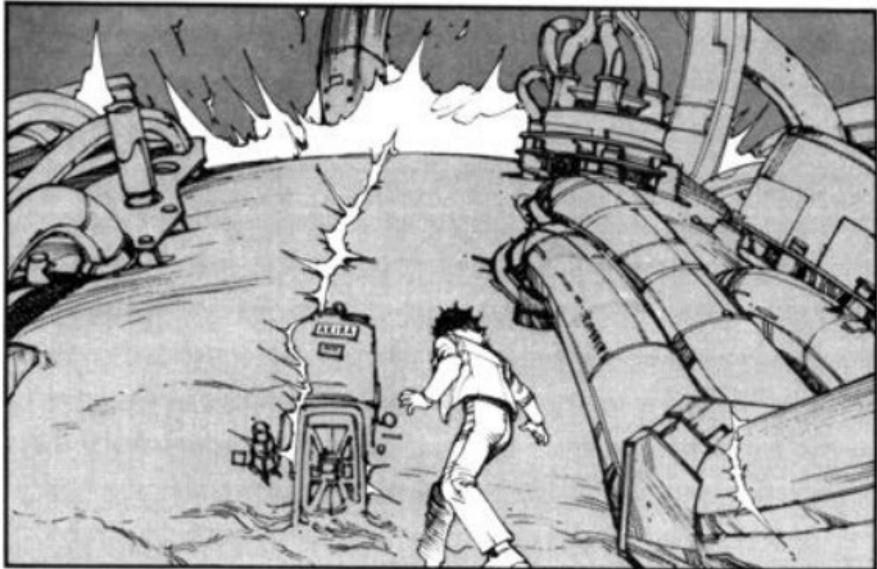


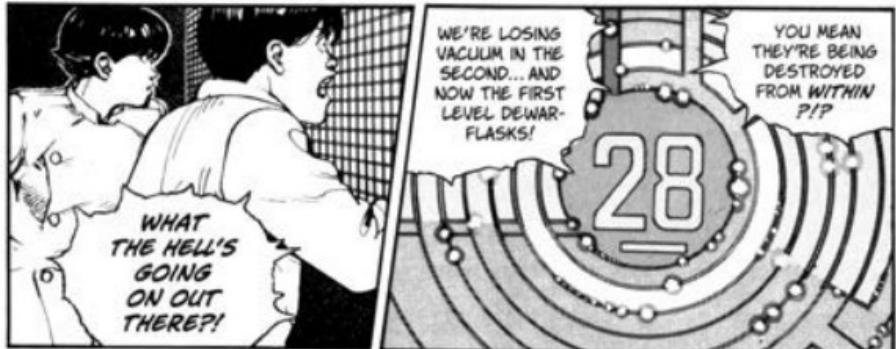






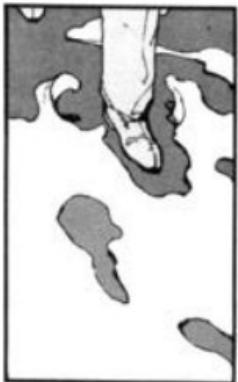
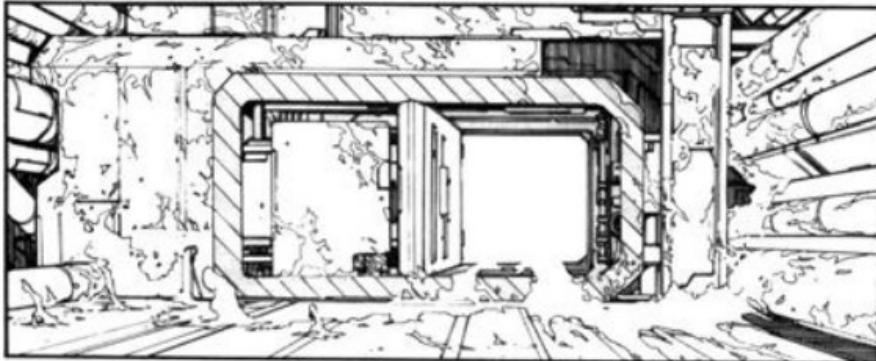


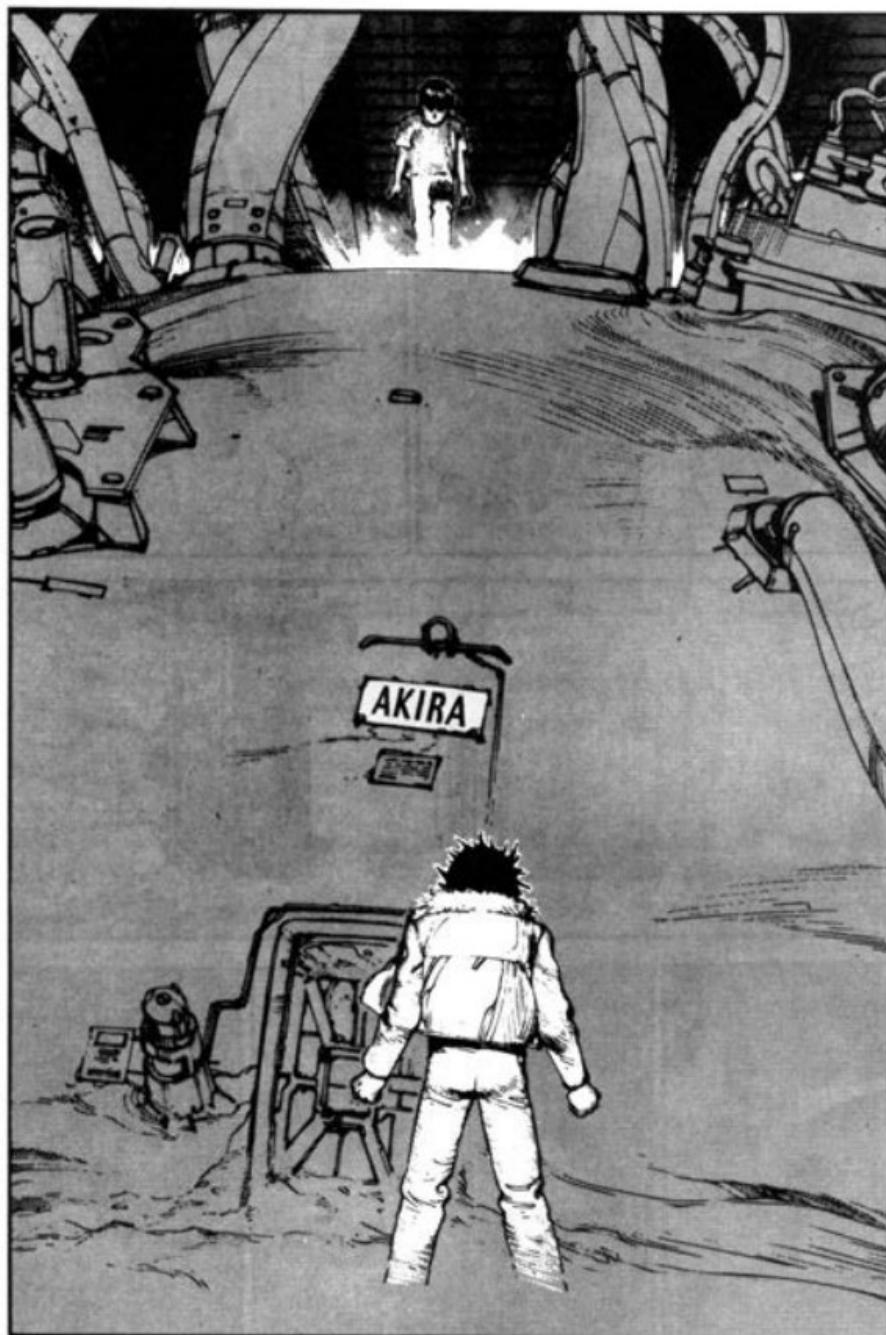












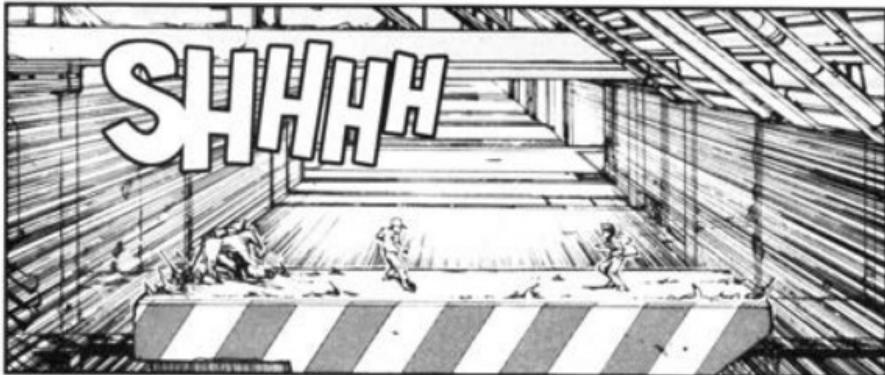












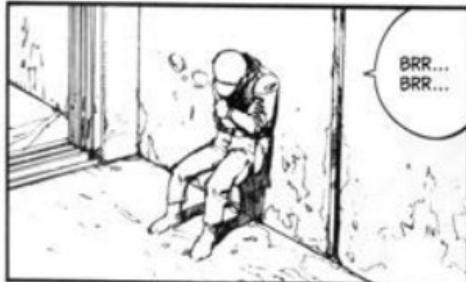










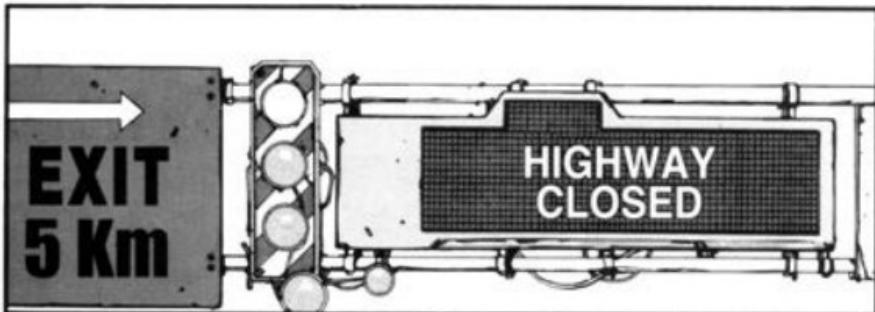






YOU HEAR THAT? A CODE
SEVEN ALERT--WHAT-
EVER'S UP, THE BRASS
RANKS IT AS WORSE
THAN A NUCLEAR
ATTACK!





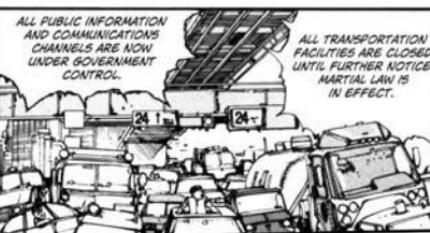


...AND TWENTY-FOUR
MINUTES. THIS IS A
CODE SEVEN ALERT. A
STATE OF EXTREME
EMERGENCY
EXISTS.

ALL PUBLIC INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATIONS
CHANNELS ARE NOW
UNDER GOVERNMENT
CONTROL.

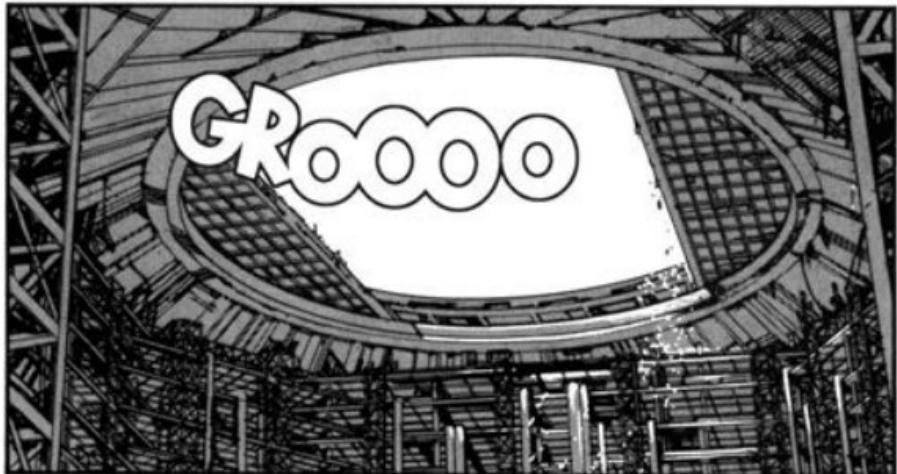
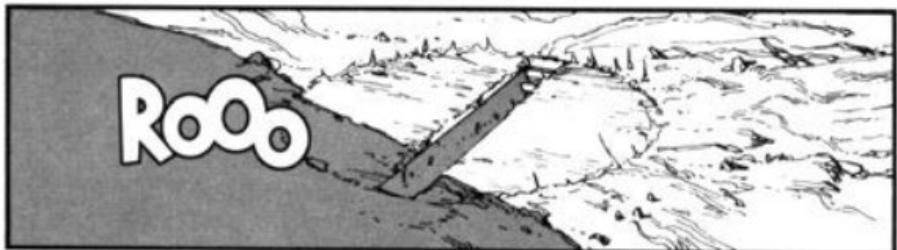
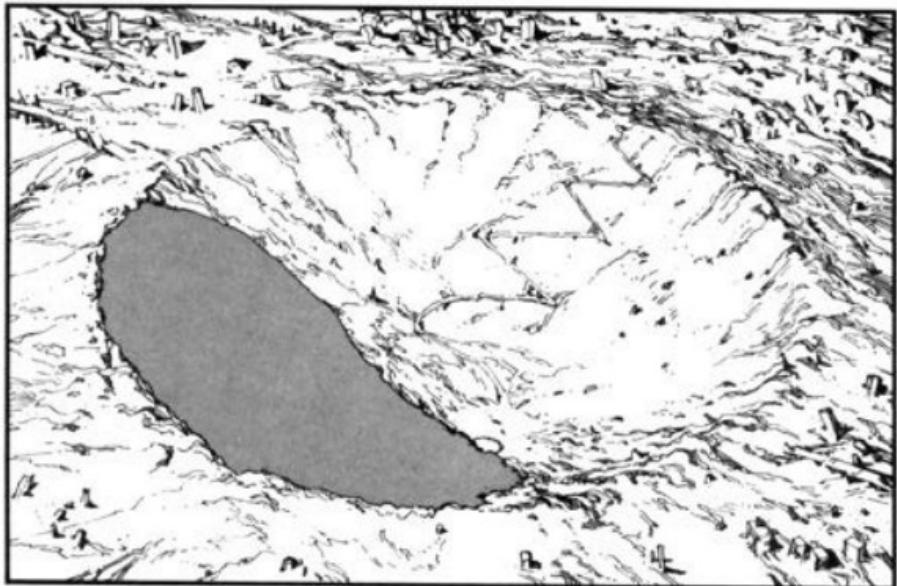
ALL TRANSPORTATION
FACILITIES ARE CLOSED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
MARTIAL LAW IS
IN EFFECT.

REPORT AT ONCE
TO YOUR ASSIGNED
EMERGENCY SHELTER.
THERE ARE TEN MINUTES
REMAINING UNTIL
SHELTER DOORS ARE
AUTOMATICALLY
CLOSED.





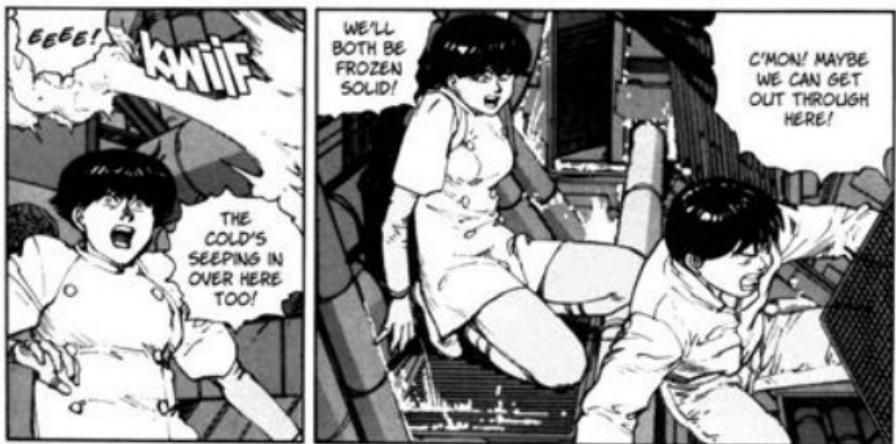
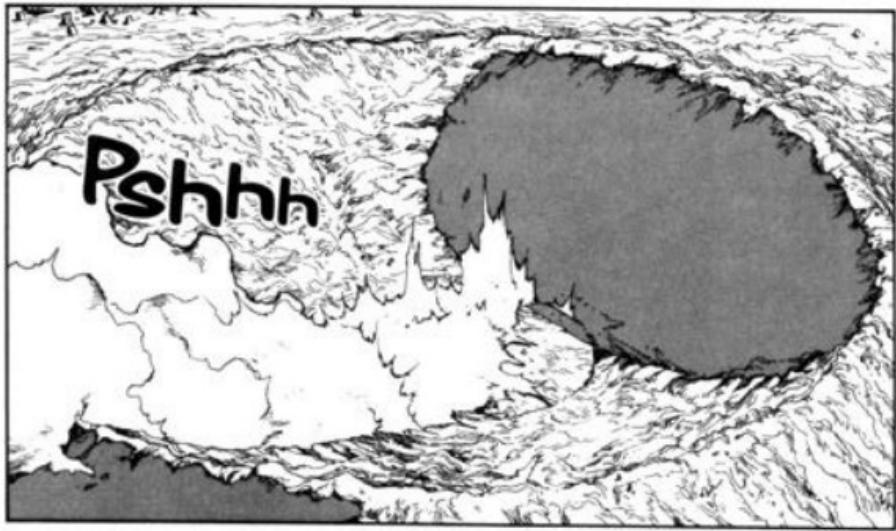


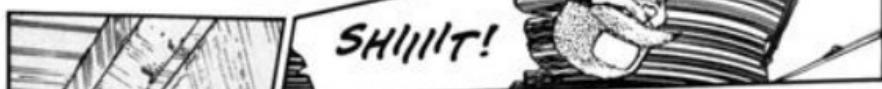




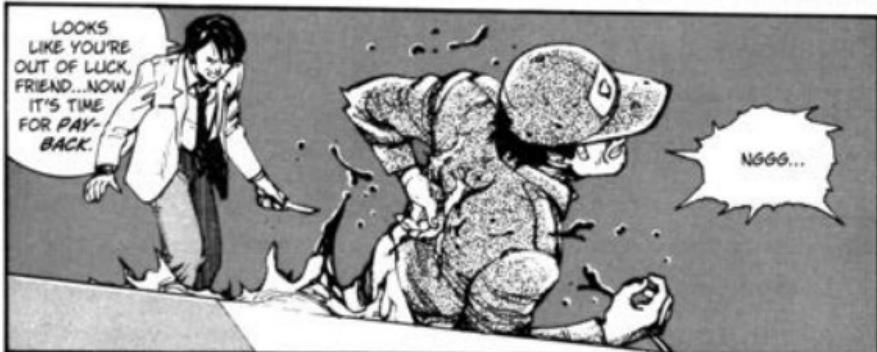








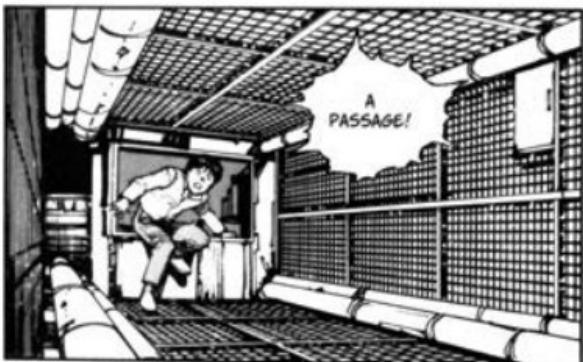




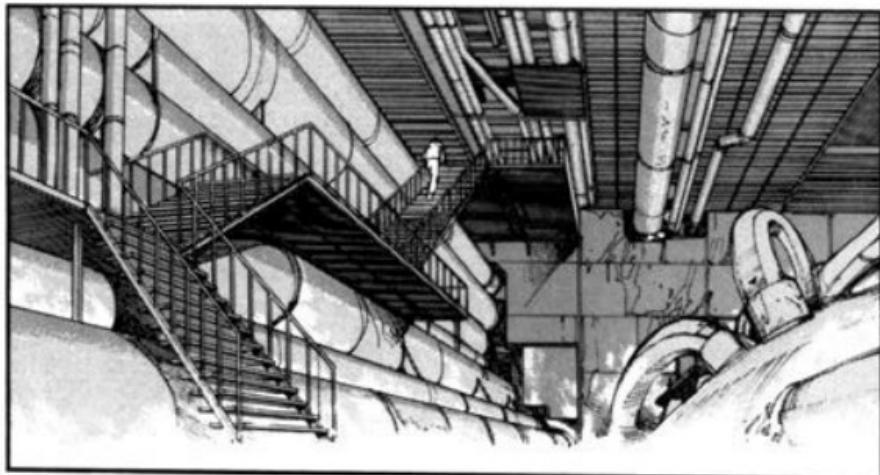


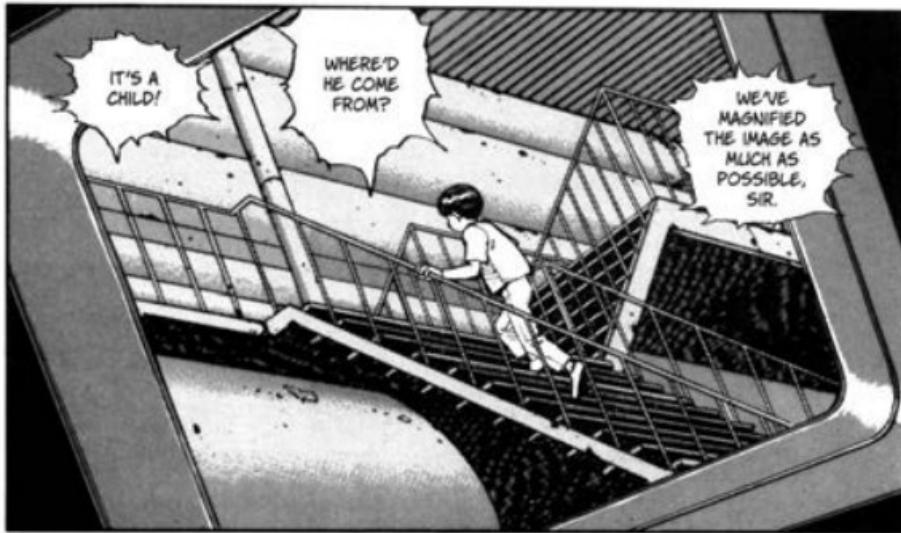








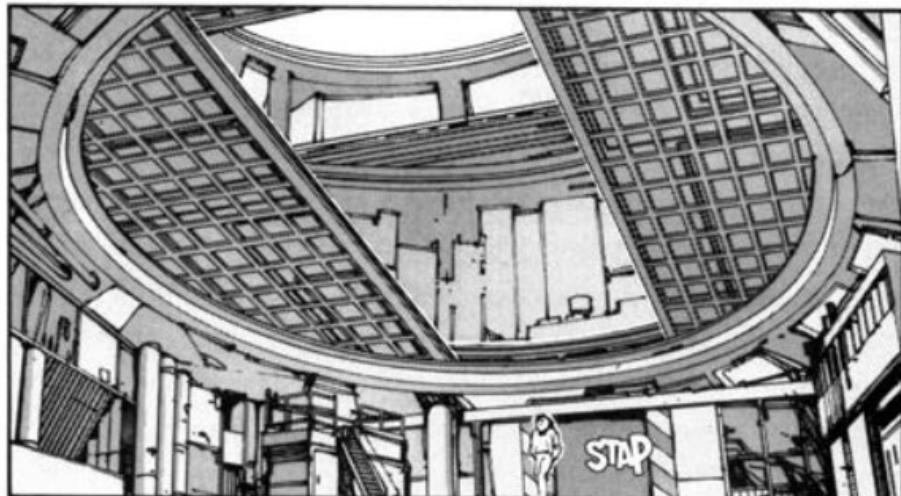
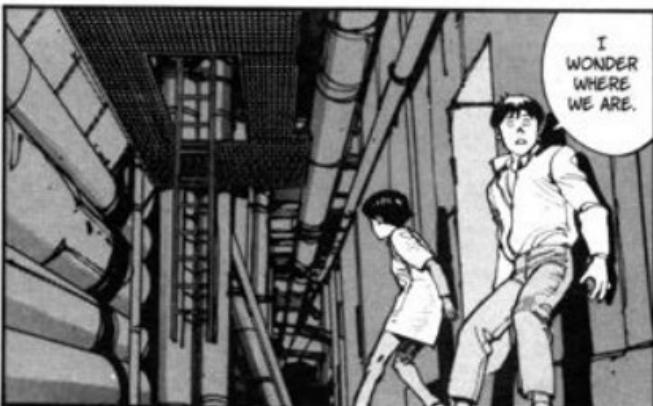


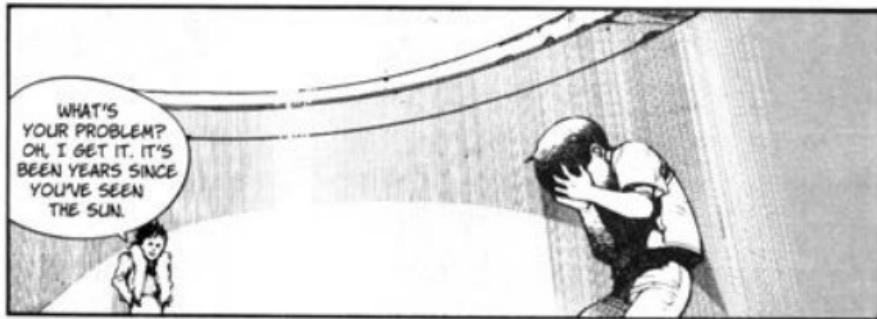
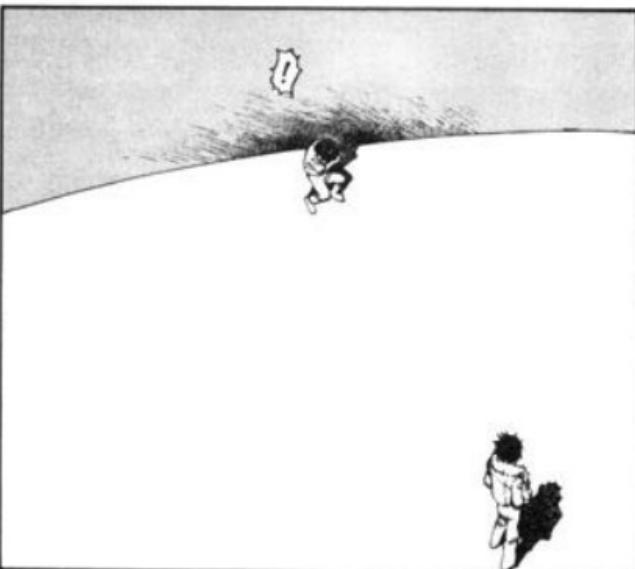


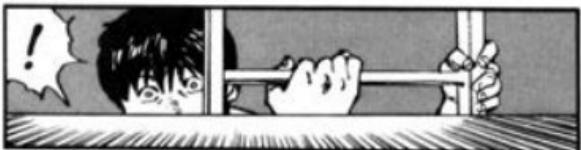


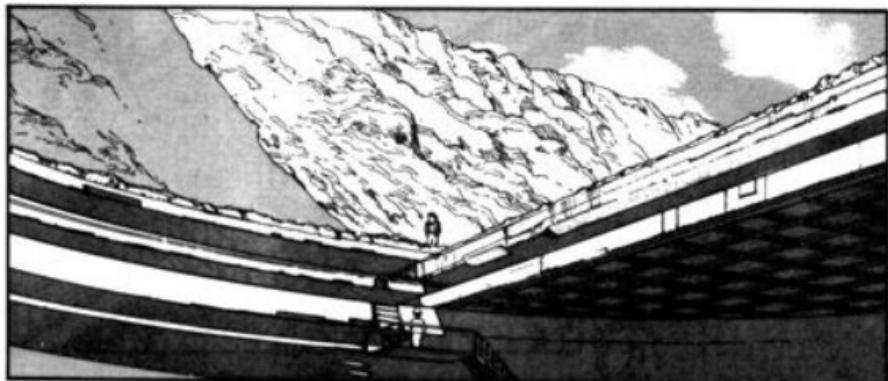
I DON'T CARE!
WE'RE GOING TO NEED MISSILES... FIGHTER PLANES!
CALL FOR EVERY WEAPON AVAILABLE!



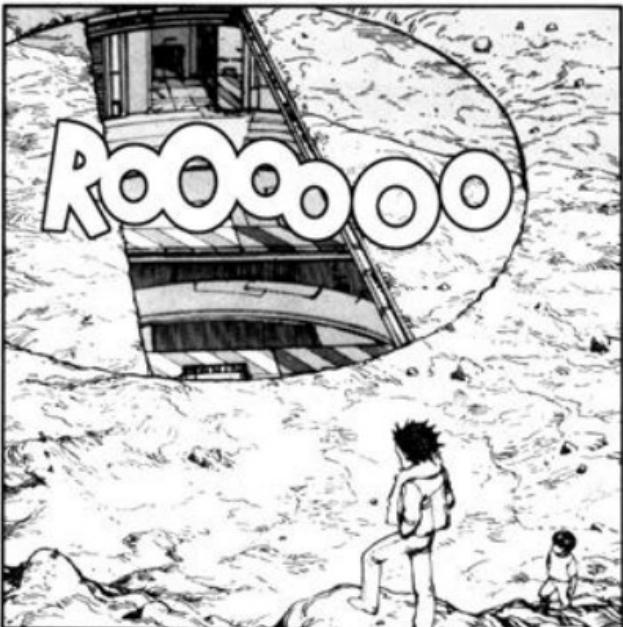




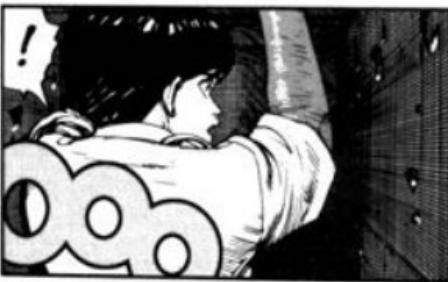














HEY!

C'MON...
I WAS
JUST...

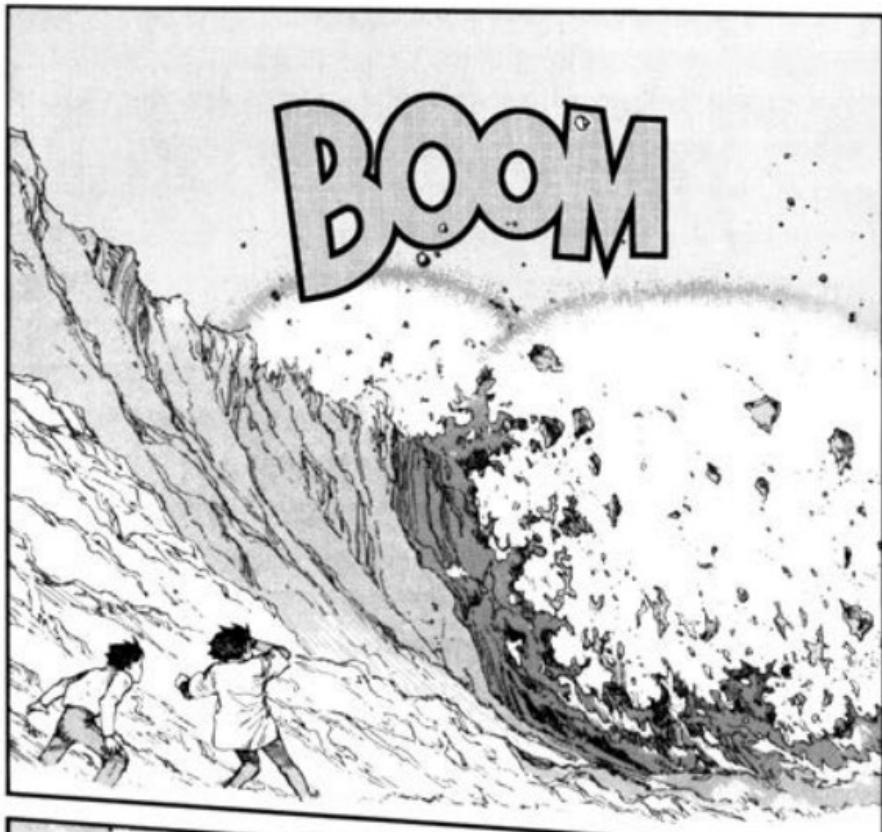






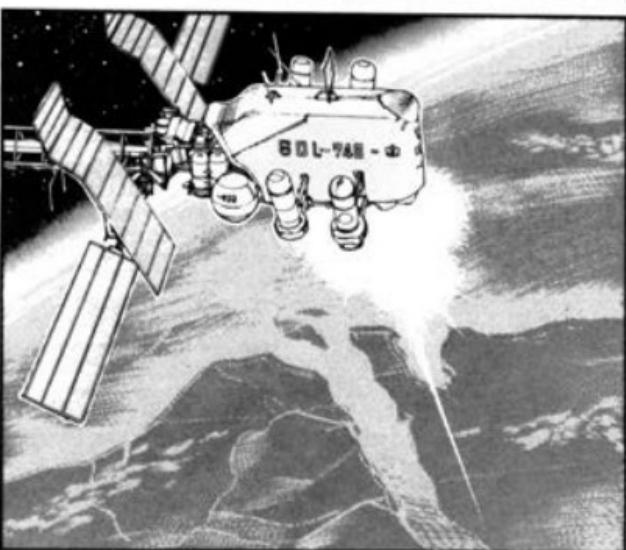
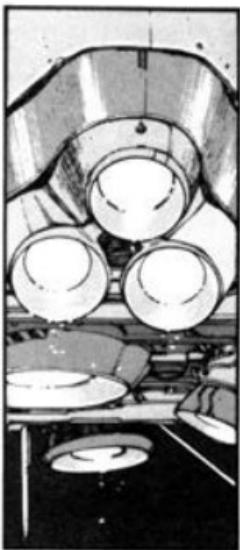








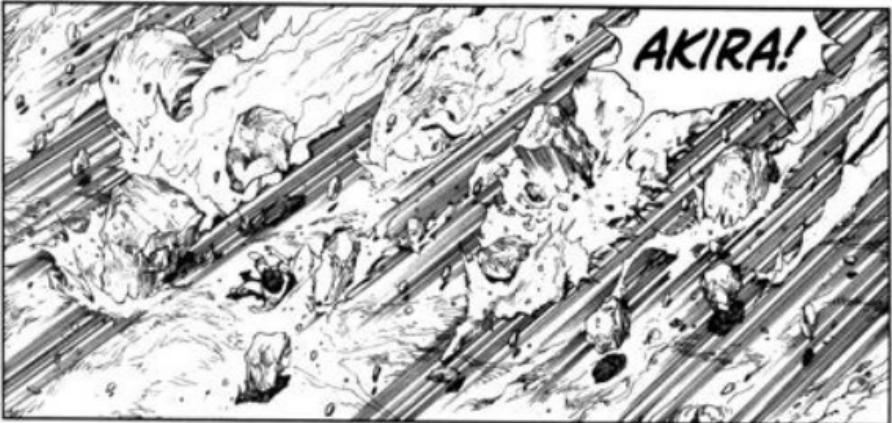
ERROR-CORRECTION
DATA COMPILED!
TRACKING
CONTROL
ADJUSTMENTS
COMPLETE!







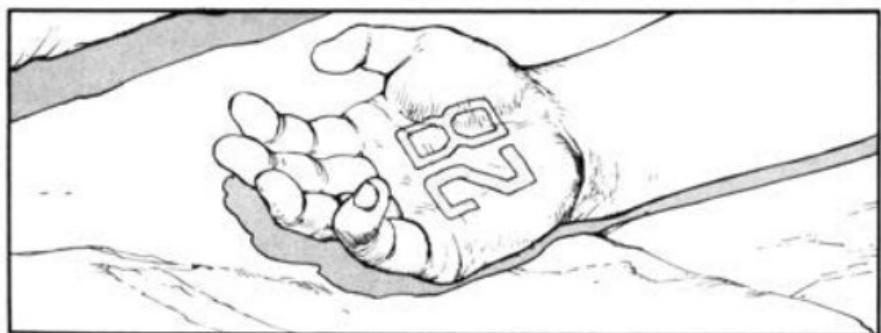
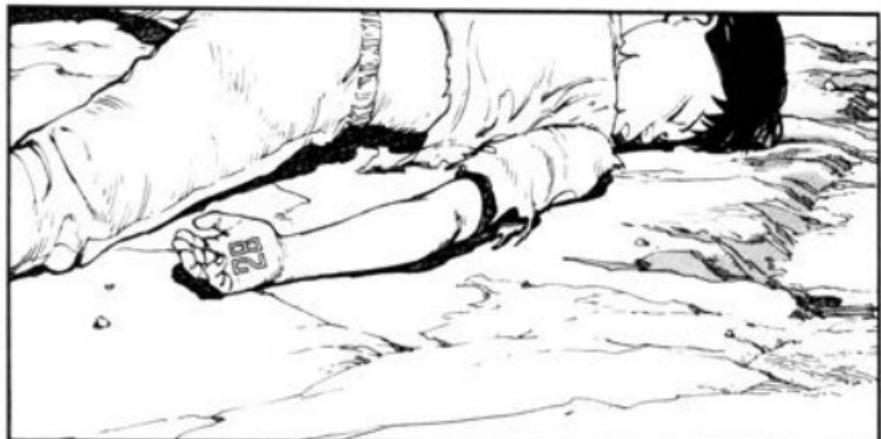




AKIRA!















IN THE 21ST CENTURY,

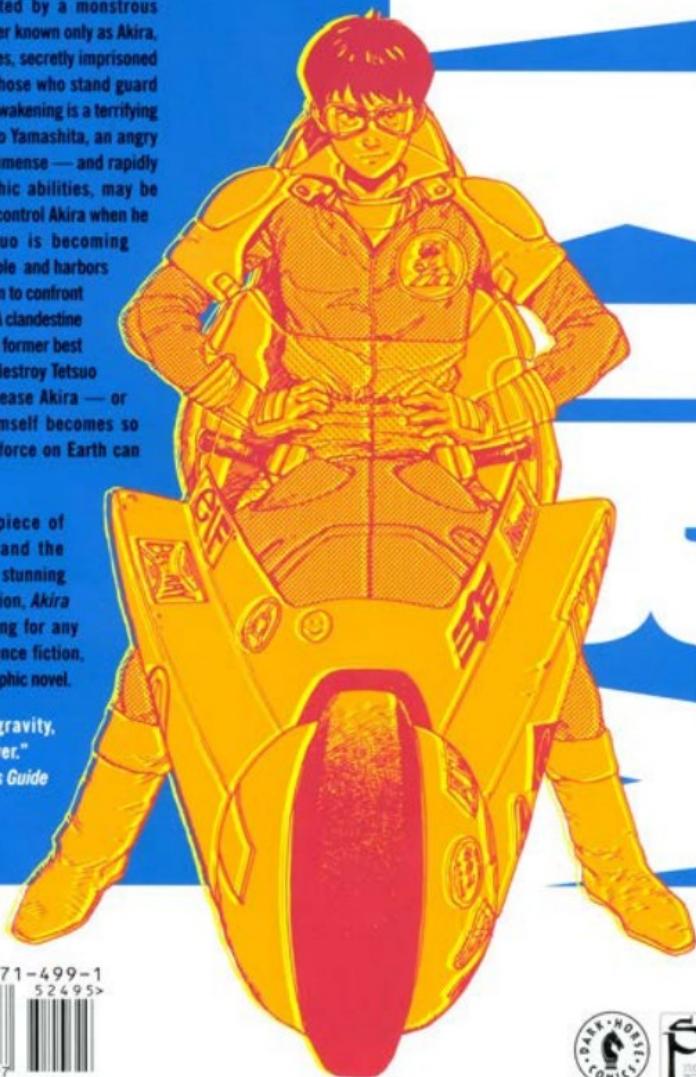
Neo-Tokyo has risen from the ashes of a Tokyo obliterated by a monstrous psychokinetic power known only as Akira, a being who yet lives, secretly imprisoned in frozen stasis. Those who stand guard know that Akira's awakening is a terrifying inevitability. Tetsuo Yamashita, an angry young man with immense — and rapidly growing — psychic abilities, may be their only hope to control Akira when he wakes. But Tetsuo is becoming increasingly unstable and harbors a growing obsession to confront Akira face-to-face. A clandestine group including his former best friend sets out to destroy Tetsuo before he can release Akira — or before Tetsuo himself becomes so powerful that no force on Earth can stop him!

An epic masterpiece of graphic fiction and the inspiration for its stunning animated adaptation, *Akira* is required reading for any enthusiast of science fiction, manga, and the graphic novel.

"Packed with gravity, mystery, and power."

—Comics Buyer's Guide

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AKIRA

2

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